

CONVERSATIONS WITH NAPOLEON III





CONVERSATIONS WITH NAPOLEON III

A Collection of Documents, mostly unpublished
and almost entirely Diplomatic, Selected
and arranged with Introductions

By

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*DEDICATED
TO
HER GRACE,
EVELYN, DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON*

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	PREFACE	II
I.	INTRODUCTION. Old and New Diplomacy. By Sir VICTOR WELLESLEY	13
II.	INTRODUCTION. The Stage and the Actors. By ROBERT SENCOURT	24
III.	THE CRIMEAN WAR	50
IV.	ITALY AND THE VATICAN	109
V.	THE CONGRESS AND SADOWA	207
VI.	THE LUXEMBOURG INCIDENT	322
VII.	FALL AND EXILE	358

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<small>FACING PAGE</small>
NAPOLEON III. From a photograph in the possession of the Duke of Alba	<i>frontispiece</i>
NAPOLEON III. From the bust by Lequin at Malmaison .	32
DOÑA EUGÉNIA. From a drawing by the Prince de Soinville, 1852	42
THE EMPRESS EUGENIE. From a portrait by Winterhalter at Malmaison	50
NAPOLEON III. From a portrait by Yvon at Malmaison .	50
SOME REMARKABLE SKETCHES OF THE EMPEROR BY CARPEAUX. The original at Malmaison	130
PRINCE AND PRINCESS RICHARD METTERNICH. THE DUKE DE MORNY AND M. DROUYN DE LHUY'S. From photographs in the possession of Sir Victor Wellesley	178
EARL COWLEY. Ambassador 1852-1867. From a photograph in the possession of Sir Victor Wellesley	230
THE SOVEREIGNS RIDING OUT FROM THE TUILERIES FOR THE EXHIBITION OF 1867. From the painting by Porion at Malmaison	332
THE SOVEREIGNS OF FRANCE, RUSSIA, AND PRUSSIA, 1867. From a sketch by Carpeaux at Malmaison	342
THE EMPEROR AT CAMDEN PLACE. From a signed photograph in the possession of Sir Victor Wellesley	370
THE BED IN WHICH THE EMPEROR DIED IN HIS ROOM AT CAMDEN PLACE. From a photograph in the possession of Sir Victor Wellesley	376

PREFACE

THERE is little original work in this book ; it is hardly more than a collection of documents, for the most part unpublished. These unpublished documents are taken not only from the Record Office in London, but also from the State Archives of Vienna. For the most part, however, they come from the private papers of the first Earl Cowley, Queen Victoria's Ambassador in Paris from 1852 to 1867.

In quoting from this correspondence we are under considerable obligations of courtesy. His Majesty the King has graciously given us permission to publish some letters of Queen Victoria : and we are under additional obligations to His Grace the Duke of Alba, who has also supplied us with our frontispiece ; to the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Clarendon, the Earl of Malmesbury, and Earl Russell for permission to publish letters the originals of which are in their possession ; for further services of courtesy to Lady Ottoline Morrell, to Lady Burghclere, and to M. Jean Bourguignon who has allowed us to publish some Carpeaux drawings from the collection at Malmaison, and above all to the Rev. F. A. Simpson, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who read the book through before it was printed, and guided us with excellent advice. And most especially are we indebted, in the preparation of this book, to help from Miss Anne Norman, of the Foreign Office.

But we also include, marked by an asterisk, a number of letters which have been published already. The reasons why we have included them are these : First that we considered them essential to the narrative at the various turning points to which they relate.

This is in fact the same principle which guided us in our selection from the thirty volumes of Lord Cowley's correspondence. If the light came in particular cases, and more as the reign went on from Prince Richard Metternich rather than from Lord Cowley, we thought it wiser not to confine ourselves to the unpublished letters of Prince Richard. Those which had been published were not in the first case translated into English; but secondly, when they were published in their original language in the *Rhein-politik* of Professor Oncken, it was always to develop a thesis which fuller extracts from the Vienna archives alone would have undermined. Was it less than necessary to bring them in to make a sequence in a less biased account?

We could not, of course, publish anything like all the recorded conversations of or with Napoleon III. We had to cut them down to reasonable, or rather digestible, and, if we could, palatable, proportions. What we have aimed at is to tell the whole story, and to tell it as shortly as possible, and to tell it in a way which would give an historian or a general reader, and especially a Frenchman, the essential information. Oncken for obvious reasons is hardly known in France. But even in England and America he has not been widely read, and very few know the Cavour-Nigra letters; and practically nothing which we include has been translated into English before.

In the first section on the Franco-Prussian War it was our aim, in view of Mr. R. H. Lord's admirable collection of documents in his book on the Origins of the War, only to include such material as he had omitted which was yet essential to understanding the mind of the French Emperor at that crisis.

V. W.
R. S.

I

INTRODUCTION

OLD AND NEW DIPLOMACY

I

The Diplomacy of Napoleon III compared with that of To-day

FRANCE, said Thiers, made two mistakes, the first when she accounted Louis Napoleon a fool, and the second when she took him for a genius. The words show that sort of insight that men can expect from their fiercest opponents : and recall to us the mysterious man who held the stage, and shaped the destinies of Europe for nearly twenty-five years. His achievements no less than his failures are largely responsible for a political constellation which finally led to the catastrophe of 1914. To his military success is due the unity of Italy, to his lack of political foresight the unity of Germany. How different would have been the course of history had Louis Napoleon, instead of sympathizing with the Prussian aspirations which ultimately led to his destruction, intervened on the side of Denmark in 1864 and of Austria in 1866 ! And yet in spite of political blunders so far-reaching he was not devoid of flashes of insight into the distant future which in the light of subsequent events show that where most a fool, he was, if not a genius, at least a prophet ; as, for instance, when, during his captivity at Wilhelmshöhe he could say that a united Germany would be driven into acts of

aggression which would end in her being crushed by her adversaries. Profligate, charitable, adventurous, scheming, ambitious, his reign is punctuated with palace intrigue, with schemes for the embellishment of the French metropolis, with political plots, with military enterprise, with cultural and industrial developments such as France had never before witnessed.

The records of conversations contained in this volume, of prominent diplomatists who were in almost daily contact with Napoleon III, can hardly fail to be of interest to students of history for the insight they afford into the character and career of this remarkable man who, alone among sovereigns, seemed to anticipate the economic tendencies of the future, especially in relation to the doctrines of Marx and who alone could visualize Europe as a whole and think internationally. These papers are not merely excerpts from the public archives of London, Rome, and Vienna : half of them come from the private papers of the first Earl Cowley who was British Ambassador in Paris from 1852 to 1867. These papers should be of far greater moment than the public despatches of the Ambassador, since, in those days, it was the practice to convey the more important information in private letters addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs personally.

Thus, apart from their historical value, they serve equally to illustrate the difference between the diplomacy of an age which has now passed away and that of to-day ; the reign of Napoleon III marks the starting point of modern diplomacy.

His were still the days when the success of a diplomatist largely depended upon individual initiative and the personal influence which he could

exercise over ruling autocrats untrammelled by the fetters of rigid instructions. The growth of democracy has changed all this so that now, in the words of the late M. Jusserand, formerly French Ambassador at Washington, "The importance of persuading a Prince and his Minister has diminished, that of understanding a nation has increased."

But the hey-days of the old Diplomacy began to wane long before the Second Empire, when the telegraph gradually came to be the normal method of communication, so that instructions could be asked for and obtained with the minimum of delay. Prior to the advent of the telegraph the Heads of Missions abroad were far more frequently called upon to act on their own responsibility in time of emergency than is now the case. They were also better placed to lead their Governments in matters of policy affecting the countries to which they were accredited, for they were not drawn into the whirlpool of "*Welt-politik*".

We get an interesting glimpse of the diplomacy of those days in a letter from Mr. George Villiers, afterwards Lord Clarendon and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, when in 1835, as British Minister at Madrid and at the height of the Carlist War, he writes to his brother in the following illuminating terms :—

" It has been an anxious, but very exciting state of things, and the position in which, from a variety of circumstances, I found myself placed, entailed upon me an amount of intervention and responsibility which were far from being disagreeable. Whether my proceedings have given satisfaction to the Foreign Office I have not the remotest idea, as you, who know the practice of that Temple of Procrastination, will readily believe. It is many weeks since I have received an acknowledgment even of my despatches, or a line

either public or private. I can't say that I fash myself about it, for I neither ask nor wish for instructions and am quite contented to be left a free agent. Such being the case, it is very amusing to read the French newspapers, which have for the last three weeks been commenting upon the policy of the English Government in Spain—as if it had any, and upon my instructions, as if they were lying before the Editors. All agree, however, that there has been a grand struggle between French and English diplomacy."

Then again in 1836 :—

"I will not deny that A's account to you of my Foreign Office and French reputation is very satisfactory to me because I feel that it is earned off my own bat : for nobody can say that I have ever received an instruction or a single crumb of support. By the holy poker, if my powers had been equal to my will and if I had had the means of giving effect to my views—views which have always been fairly laid before my masters, always approved and never acted on—you would have seen whether I would not have governed the country."

Others less eager than Lord Clarendon to shoulder responsibility would resent rather than welcome the absence of instructions, as, for instance, in 1840, relations with France being very strained over the Egyptian question, we learn that "Lord Granville is very angry at the position in which he is placed at Paris—left without instructions—completely in the dark, just when the situation there is so extremely difficult and delicate. He even talked of resignation."

Much more had of necessity in those days to be left to the discretion of the man on the spot than is now the case. He could often act on his own initiative and lead his Government rather than be directed by it. Though the telegraph went far to deprive diplomats of their independence and to discourage their initiative, still the process was a gradual one; for so long as such names as Stratford de Redcliffe,

Sir William White, Lord Lyons, and Lord Cromer could be counted among British diplomatists, the age of the great Proconsuls cannot be said to have entirely passed away.

Up to the outbreak of the Great War diplomacy was dominated almost exclusively by great political issues. With all his might Palmerston struggled with Louis Philippe over the Spanish Marriages. For years the unity of Italy and Germany and the Papal question occupied the minds of Sovereigns and Diplomatists. For decades British policy in the Near East centred round the exclusion of Russia from Constantinople and from the Pamirs. The question of a title for Napoleon III was felt to be so grave that some thought (though wrongly as these papers will show) that it was one of the causes of the Crimean War. All this has now passed into the limbo of an almost forgotten age.

Outside these purely political issues there was little to disturb the equanimity, or ruffle the feathers of the diplomatists. Indeed, outside the European arena there was comparatively little scope for diplomatic activity. Incidents, no doubt, might arise anywhere, and among rival nations a jealous eye was kept on territorial ambitions in other continents ; but if we examine the state of the world as recently as 1870 we find that there were only four Great Powers : Great Britain, France, Russia, and Austria ; and that while there are now fifteen there were then only five British Embassies. The United States of America was known merely as a vast undeveloped country where people could make fortunes quickly, of less account to Europe than South America is to-day. Japan had hardly emerged from a state of mediævalism, and Germany and Italy were split up into a number of small States. Diplomacy in those

days was a *parti Carré* among the four Great Powers, and around these great luminaries the lesser satellites revolved. The chief characteristic of diplomacy at that time was its purely nationalistic outlook : in this respect the only exception was Napoleon III.

The rise of the German Empire after 1870 marks the beginning of a new epoch in the character of diplomacy—the process of transformation which, though at first hardly perceptible in its effects on the conduct of Foreign Affairs, has been greatly accelerated by the Great War and its aftermath. The purely political issue has ceased to be the dominant feature in modern diplomacy and has given pride of place to the great politico-economic problems of to-day, which Louis Napoleon had dimly sensed.

Up to 1870 Great Britain was the pioneer in industrial evolution and had become the workshop of the world. Her policy of free trade and *laissez-faire* suited her admirably in a world devoid of competitors, and so long as those conditions obtained the economic factor obtruded itself very little into the broad political issues with which her diplomacy had to concern itself. Great Britain's position as the world's manufacturer, banker, and carrier had been firmly established in all quarters of the globe. The late arrival of Germany as a competitor against her forced upon that rising country a concentration of effort and the adoption of methods hitherto unknown, because her policy had to be essentially an aggressive one if she was to get a place in the sun at all. Hence we get that system of close interlocking of finance with industry and commerce which, up to the Great War, came very near to trading as a national unit. This development ultimately dominated Germany's political action abroad. German discipline and efficiency became a menace

to the British wasteful and uneconomic pioneering methods which, though they had produced unbounded prosperity in the past, represented rather the luxuriant growth of the jungle than the orderliness of the cultivated garden. The spirit of collectivism had taken up the challenge against individualism.

Close on the heels of Germany followed the United States with even greater resources and potentialities. Other countries joined in the race, until to-day we have all nations competing against each other with every offensive and defensive weapon to be found in the economic armoury. The result is that half the world is now trying to sell what the other half cannot buy.

How can we account for this sudden fundamental change? The truth is that for twenty centuries most States were predominantly agricultural and remained economically self-sufficient units within their political boundaries. Exchange in manufactured articles only took place to a very limited degree.

The introduction of machinery changed the world in three generations to a greater extent than anything that has happened since the time of the Romans. Industrial development has led to a degree of economic interdependence undreamt of by our forefathers. To-day no economic disturbance can take place in one part of the world without instant repercussions in all the others. This has brought about profound changes in international relationships as well as in the internal structure of nations. Less than a hundred years ago nations were comparatively self-sufficient. To-day the world is an amalgam, becoming ever more closely knit by economic interdependence, by facilities of communication and transport, and by the mechanism of international finance in spite of nationalist policies pursued everywhere.

If it can be said that international relations represent two sets of forces operating independently of each other, yet reacting on each other, namely the activities between the individuals of one nation with those of another, and the functions of Governments which regulate those activities, then it is not surprising that such immense developments in the former should produce such profound changes in the sphere of modern diplomacy. The diplomatic problems of to-day are no longer purely political in the sense that they were when nations were more or less economically self-sufficient, even as late as the days of Louis Napoleon. Not only have international relations become increasingly and predominantly economic in character, but the greater universality of their subject matter has made them all embracing. There is now scarcely any form of human activity which does not in some measure enter into the mosaic of Foreign Affairs. Not only politics and economics but science, art, and literature, sport, and sociology contribute their quota. These influences have, of course, always been present throughout the ages, but their active participation in the day to day contact of one nation with another has never been so manifest as to-day.

We live in a highly competitive world, in which the forces of internationalism are in perpetual conflict with nationalism. Human progress is responsible for the paradoxical situation where the normal economic activities of the individual in all countries tends towards internationalism and that of Governments towards nationalism. These are the great undercurrents of which political issues are merely the symptoms. This is not a new phenomenon. It has always been so, but so long as nations were economically self-sufficient these currents lay beneath the political surface and diplomacy could deal with

the symptoms alone. What is new is the accelerated pace at which economic issues have been forced to the political surface as the result of the Great War. No longer is it possible to treat the symptoms only without probing beneath the surface. One of the results of these developments in all countries has been to fuse foreign and domestic policy more closely together than it has ever been before. Indeed, it may be said that they have become two aspects of one and the same problem and that the former is now no more than an extension of the latter. The tendency is for all economic problems to become more and more complex and technical. This, together with the far more universal character of economic compared with political problems has tended to concentrate the direction of affairs foreign at home and reduce the scope and initiative of diplomatists abroad. Hence, too, the enormous growth of international conferences in every direction. The more the League of Nations grows in authority and influence in international affairs the more firmly established will become the practice of settling the larger issues at Geneva. Not only has the League greatly increased the opportunity for personal contact between Heads of Governments and the Ministers of all countries, but the facilities of aviation and long-distance telephone are also tending to supersede the normal diplomatic channel. To-day, in times of crisis, great issues are more likely to be settled by meetings or conferences between Ministers.

Compare this system with that of Napoleon III and it will at once be evident how the individual and personal qualities of diplomatists has had to give way to greater team-work and closer contact between the fountain-heads of authority in all countries.

Formerly diplomatists spoke with the prestige of the military force behind them. To-day they have to use the language of tariffs, of prohibition, preferences, embargoes, inflation, deflation, and such-like to reinforce the logic of their arguments, and they are brought into far closer contact than ever before with the bankers, the traders, and the industrialists, and lesser folk who go to make up the economic life of a nation.

New conditions call for a new technique in diplomacy. Although there may be less scope for diplomatists to take a leading part in the shaping of policy than was possible half a century ago, the problems of to-day, on the other hand, are infinitely more interesting and complex than ever before, but the difference between the old and the new dispensation lies in the fact that whereas in Louis Napoleon's time diplomacy was more of an art than a science, it is to-day more of a science than an art.

Diplomacy used to be regarded as one of the silent services. Lord Newton tells us, in his life of Lord Lyons, that, after five years' residence in the United States, Lord Lyons could boast that he "had never taken a drink, or made a speech". While this Spartan attitude towards drink would certainly not be out of harmony with the present-day "dry" America, few diplomatists to-day can escape the ordeal of speech-making, least of all in Washington.

But all these tendencies first took shape under what my collaborator has shown to be the prophetic influence of Napoleon III. He it was who at the Paris Congress of 1856 first encouraged those general international discussions which now keep collecting Foreign Ministers at Geneva. He it was who saw that diplomacy involved business and in his Commercial Treaty with England took direct counsel

of merchants and economists, an unprecedented procedure for an autocrat of those days. He it was who openly embraced the free trade doctrine of Richard Cobden. He, in his interviews with foreign Sovereigns and the Ministers of foreign States, arranged international relations over the heads of both the Quai d'Orsay and his Embassies. He saw that neither trade nor culture nor ideas could be purely national, and tried to provide for the welfare of Europe as a whole. He is the great liaison, therefore, between the old diplomacy and the new. If it be true that we have reached a stage when, in the words of M. Delaisi in his *Political Myths and Economic Realities*, "The supreme danger to the individual and to property lies in multiple sovereignties combined with economic nationalism," it would be difficult to find a more suggestive subject for the modern student of international relations than Napoleon III.

This line of thought recapitulates the contentions which Mr. Sencourt has already worked out in his recent book, *Napoleon III: The Modern Emperor*. That and his *Empress Eugénie* supply the narrative which connects the documents quoted here.

I have been happy to take this opportunity of collaborating with him in giving to the public a collection of documents which recall the secret history of a man and of a period of unique interest in the annals of diplomacy. Mr. Sencourt will introduce the person of this drama, but he is not making here any analysis of the character or politics of the Emperor. That, as I have suggested, would only be to repeat what he has recently set down in his own works.

V. W.

June, 1932.

II

THE STAGE AND THE ACTORS

THE confidential letters which we publish here are not written in the style of a narrative ; if, in point of fact, they do give the secret history of the Second Empire, at least as far as its international relations were concerned, it is because firstly Napoleon III spoke more freely to foreigners than he did to his own subjects ; "When I open my heart to some one," he said, "I speak frankly, and that is my way of doing diplomacy"¹ ; because the foreigners who saw most of him were there to give from week to week the fullest possible account of what he said, and all they knew about him ; and thirdly because these foreigners did not depend on him for their appointments so that their official experience extended over a greater length of years than that of a Minister.

The first of the sources on which we draw is the Vienna Archives, and letters of Count or, as he then was, Baron, Hübner. Hübner was a most accomplished writer, and there is no better example of his style than a despatch which comes almost at the opening of our direct citations, the despatch which tells the lurid story of how Louis Napoleon courted Eugénie. From Hübner, the polished and yet mocking voice of Talleyrand seems to speak again to mingle loyalty with cynicism and wit with feeling. Brought up in the school of the great Metternich, Hübner loved the state and tradition of the *ancien régime*. To him monarchical authority was one article of

¹ V.N.A. Hübner to Buol. 10th June, 1853.

a consecrated faith. He moved, therefore, in the old Catholic families of the aristocracy, and it was fitting that he should end his career as Ambassador to the Papal Court. But, by one of life's ironies, this distinguished diplomat was unacceptable to Napoleon III because he was a parvenu. He came of an origin so low that, like the other children of his mother, he could point to no one as his father. He had as a boy been given a place in the office of a diplomat. From there his extraordinary talents raised him into the actual career of diplomacy, and in 1847 he was at the suggestion of Metternich appointed Minister in Paris. One of his immediate subordinates was Metternich's own son, Richard, who succeeded him in the Paris Embassy in 1859.

Prince Richard Metternich, who had just married his own niece, the Hungarian Countess Pauline Sandor, became at once the most popular person at the Court of the Tuileries. The Metternichs were very rich and very able. They both had the distinction and independence of the most remarkable persons in a ruling class. She had very thick lips, a flat nose, and with them the agility of a monkey. But while she had the verve of a wild animal, her eyes and tongue witnessed a brilliant mind. What she thought she said, and her thought leapt to the place of danger. Though she was one of those *maitresses femmes* to whom conventionalities are a toy, she never compromised her rank or dignity. Yet one could not have found a greater contrast than she to the large, handsome, imperturbable uncle whom she had married. For Richard Metternich was a very sound fellow ; he loved Paris, he loved his own country, he respected the remarkable Sovereigns to whom he was accredited ; the amplitude of his sympathies as *grand seigneur* won all their confidence, so that all their plans could be

reported in long despatches to Vienna. He saw everything through the luminous ripeness of his own nature. His style was not as pointed as Hübner's ; but if as a writer he was less brilliant, he was far more effective as an ambassador. Hübner was a little inclined to preach to the Emperor ; and of sermons even the most patient Sovereigns will not stand much. Prince Richard was more astute, seeing that if one wants to have an influence it is better to listen than to speak. He was as phlegmatic as his wife was mischievous, and that was his strength. On both of them the moral sense sat lightly : yet loyalty to them, as to the Empress, was all in all.

Count von der Goltz was a paler figure ; the interest of this Prussian Minister was that he distrusted the Chancellor who gave him his instructions. He was too honest to stomach the irresistible unscrupulousness of Bismarck, and was, in fact, far more on the side of Napoleon III. The fact was that the poor man was madly in love with Eugénie. But he worshipped her from afar. She never confided her plans to him as she did to Metternich. Though he saw the time come, when her voice was almost absolute, he never so much as mentions her in his despatches. In any case, he had not the gift of penetration, and the King of Prussia could learn more from his subordinate, Prince Reuss—who returned to Paris as a special emissary at a critical moment—than he could from the long and accurate despatches of Goltz.

Before Prince Metternich returned as Ambassador in 1859, the Emperor's most regular confidant had been Lord Cowley. The British Ambassador was a quiet, grave man, a man who scarcely shone in the *salons* of the new and glittering society of the Second Empire. But he knew everything. No one has asked where he obtained his information, and he himself

does not disclose the sources of it : but it seems that he combined a knack of winning people's confidence with an unequalled system of espionage. At that time great sums were spent on buying political secrets. It was reported that Lord Palmerston had given the Emperor's valet £100,000 for access to His Majesty's secrets. Lord Cowley was a very English type. His father, a brother of the Duke of Wellington, had been Ambassador before him. He was appointed, rather suddenly and much to his own surprise, to the great Paris post when Lord Normanby, after the *Coup d'Etat*, had fallen from the Emperor's favour. Lord Cowley was then 48, and the devoted husband of a charming wife, with a gay manner, corkscrew curls, a lovely complexion, and eyes like light in a clear pool of water.

During the fifteen years when Lord Cowley was British Ambassador at Paris he enjoyed from first to last the confidence both of the Foreign Secretaries and of the Court. His private letters were written almost daily, and are sufficient proof of his ability, but they are not the only evidence. Baron Stockmar, who reflected the views of the Court, in speaking to Lord Cowley's brother, the Dean of Windsor, early in 1852—the very beginning of the Second Empire—said : “ If anyone can possibly manage that strange, unaccountable person at the head of France he is the man.” But, he added, “ he ought to be Foreign Secretary here.” When, in 1855, Lord Cowley was, for financial reasons, anxious to resign the Embassy, both the Queen and Lord Clarendon were thrown into the utmost consternation. The Queen said to Lord Clarendon : “ Every nerve must be strained to retain Lord Cowley. He is worth an army and a fleet to us.” In Lord Clarendon's opinion Lord Cowley deserved, though he did not possess,

a greater name than Stratford de Redcliffe, whose activities at Constantinople before and during the Crimean War were causing him constant anxiety and embarrassment. "If we had such a man as Cowley at Constantinople," he wrote, "I have little doubt that matters would long have been arranged." Of Lord Cowley, Lord Malmesbury in his *Memoirs of an ex-Minister* says: "I never knew a man of business so naturally gifted for the profession of diplomacy. Straightforward himself, he easily discovered guile in others who sought to deceive him, and this was well known to such. He remained Ambassador until 1867, and was not a little assisted by the remarkable intelligence of his wife, *née* de Ros, and by her knowledge of the world, of society, and of Courts." Lord Cowley's papers throw much new light on the plans and intrigues of Napoleon III. Quickly gaining the confidence of Napoleon III, he strengthened the Emperor's conviction that the only policy for France was an entente with England. It is true that it was a guiding principle with Napoleon III to avoid his uncle's mistakes, and above all the mistake of alienating England; but the last and most remarkable index to the ability of Lord Cowley is the fact that the nephew of Napoleon I should find one of his best friends and most trusted advisers in a nephew of the Duke of Wellington. The two nephews remained personal friends when the official relation between them had come to an end.

The new Emperor had compromised himself with many flirtations, political and otherwise; but when the time came to settle down with a wife, his bond was given to England as to Eugénie. England certainly as the wife of France, like Eugénie as the consort of Napoleon, did not always make married

life more tranquil. In spite of his great desire for peace, he was dragged into the Crimean War ; the war was never popular in France, and it was only with the British Ambassador that the Emperor could speak frankly. It is from the letters of Lord Cowley alone, therefore, that we can judge the great personal part of the Emperor in the Crimean War. Here we see the beginning of the Anglo-French entente : here we see how at the very beginning it was strained.

Lord Cowley, of course, sent his regular despatches to the Foreign Office ; but it was the practice for British diplomatists to supplement these official despatches by private letters to Foreign Secretaries ; the former discreet and formal to put into the Blue Books, if required, and into the archives to meet without undue delay the eyes of the historian ; the latter were personal and confidential ; they said everything and were never seen. Lord Cowley kept thirty volumes of the copies of these unofficial, or semi-official letters. The thirty volumes are now in the hands of his grandson, Sir Victor Wellesley.

No one could say that these intimate letters have a literary style. They are meant to report conversations, and they are the account of a very shrewd, sane, worldly judge of affairs, and above all of persons, as he opens his mind to men who were officially his superiors, but socially his equals and his intimate friends. As Sir Victor has explained, they picture a kind of diplomacy that has passed away.

The main subject of the letters is actual conversations with Napoleon III, but the conversations are framed in passing comment on facts and characters. No better introduction could be given to them than an extract from Hübner's despatches to Vienna during the troubled and uncertain years when Louis Napoleon was President.

To many the Prince-President seemed a revolutionary ; but in his conversations with the Austrians he expressed that side of his character which sympathized with absolute authority in government. In any case, the drama of the Presidency was his conflict with the parliamentary organization of which Thiers was the head. And yet, with England as his neighbour, which with the three other maritime Powers—France, Spain, and Portugal—had abandoned autocracy, he must consolidate himself, if he could. Many liberals were hostile to him. “By assuming the chief personal responsibility of the administration,” said *The Times*, on 1st November, 1849, “Louis Napoleon has placed himself between absolute success, crowned by absolute power, and destruction. A great man, such as his uncle, might achieve the former. A lesser man, such as the nephew, has at least not flinched from the latter.”

And yet it was the British Ambassador, Lord Normanby, who at this time alone enjoyed his confidence. “The President,” wrote Hübner, “is held in tow by England. Lord Normanby fascinates him and dominates him, even while he bores him. The Ambassador himself is hated and detested, both from the personal point of view and the national one, by every politician in the country.” Not only was England hated by the French : Louis Napoleon was distrusted by the English. “Lord Palmerston,” said the Prince-President to Hübner three years later, “is the only Englishman who has been really on my side,” and the reason, added Hübner, was that Palmerston’s liberal policy depended on remaining on good terms with France, so as to have her support against the uncompromising monarchical governments of those great Powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, which were centred at what were called “The Northern Courts”.

That system of Europe, the system that kept Europe, as a whole, under the dominance of the Northern Courts, was the system which Louis Napoleon set out to change. The letters which follow will show how.

But his earlier problem was to fortify his government in France. "I am a banner," he said to Hübner in the spring of 1849. "They wanted order, and put me at the head of the country. So I represent order, but as I tell you, at present I am only a banner; my uncle, Jerome, is a weathercock, and the wind is my cousin Napoleon." Under the return of order the industries had made a great step forward; but the powers of revolt were strong; and Paris registered a strong socialist vote on 10th March, 1850. On the 3rd April, Hübner wrote that beneath an appearance of vanity, authority was compromised. "They are dancing, and in the drawing-rooms they are making music, but at the same time they are buying gold, and preparing their passports" so that flight might be easy. The Prince-President had been coming back from Vincennes through the workmen's faubourg and suddenly, said Hübner, "as if by magic the streets had changed their aspect." Crowds had formed. More than 150,000 men blocked the streets, and the President's carriage could only proceed at a walking pace. His servants were roughly handled by the mob, and the crowd "filled the air with their vituperations". At times groups would assemble and shake their fists at the Prince, crying, "Down with the tyrant!" and the shout most often heard was "*Vive la république—vive la sociale!*" Louis Napoleon had returned to the Elysée, pale, exhausted, and utterly discouraged.

The disquiet was not quickly calmed. At noon a week later the whole town was in panic, while sinister looking workmen ran through the streets,

"spreading terror amidst peaceful citizens"; but gradually order was restored, and the army felt conscious of itself. Six months later, when the Prince-President reviewed the troops on the plains of Satory, he was greeted with the cry of *Vive l'Empereur!* General Chargarnier, who was responsible for them, issued an order to the troops that they should not make demonstrations or shouts; and Louis Napoleon was infuriated. A civil war was expected, but nothing happened; the army had not yet decided which was master—the President or his Parliament.

By the following autumn Louis Napoleon saw that the army had made up its mind, and he had made up his. For at bottom, he was not amenable to influence. "Prince Louis," Hübner had written on 15th December, 1849, "is one of those who without quite shutting their eyes to the force of logic and the evidence of facts, come back very quickly to their old ways. One can act on him only momentarily, and when he is to take steps at once. But there is nothing more ungrateful, more discouraging than this incessant work which generally ends in errors of judgment and disappointment. For that is the fate of those who on account of their calling, their interest, or their patriotism, try to persuade the President of the truth. He listens to them, he understands them, he forgets them!"

That was not all. His fits of energy were subject to violent reactions. "With his despatch of 31st October," wrote Hübner, "he inaugurated with great *éclat* a new policy which was to be expressed in action, and not in words: after that he made a real effort with himself, applying himself to business and working not only with his Ministers, but with the departmental heads under them. But these shadowy resolutions for work and activity soon gave way to



From the Bust by Lequien at Malmaison

the inclination to idleness and pleasure which form the basis of his character."

That was the weaker side of his unusual temperament. But there was the compensation of other qualities, which Hübner noticed at the beginning of 1851. "Calm, reserved, unmoved, confident in his star, firm in his will, neither irritating the Parliament, nor submitting to it, meeting its attacks which are sometimes calumniatory, sometimes sarcastic, but always venomous, with complete but not contemptuous silence, listening to all, taking counsel of none, giving the chiefs of the parliamentary majority to understand that he admits their importance without giving way to them, Prince Louis Napoleon has in this memorable circumstance shown some of those negative qualities with which men called to govern a great nation cannot dispense, but which of themselves are not enough to support the burden of power."

In the autumn of 1851 Hübner reported a struggle between the President as the representative of the people and the Parliament which was supposed to represent them but was managed by wire-pullers. "A battle is being engaged in," he wrote on 21st October, "between the President who despises the constitutional system, and those who, while despising it as much as he does, cling to it as the last anchor of safety and because they feel that the importance of talkers, that is to say, their own importance, will come to an end with parliament closing. The President, on the other hand, is promising to smash up this machine and replace it with Napoleonic institutions and utopian socialism."

"I am very much mistaken," Hübner continued three days later, "or the real prestige of the name of Louis Bonaparte in the country is not so much the

memory of his uncle's greatness as the country's hope of seeing him deliver it from government by talk."¹

Austria, in fact, had given under Schwarzenberg the example of strong monarchical authority. "The Emperor has stolen my ideas," said Louis Napoleon to Hübner, referring to Franz Josef, and he repeated the phrase when alone with Hübner, giving the diplomat to understand in what way he intended to remould France. He planned to replace the parliamentary system by a docile Senate, and the sovereignty of the people by the powers of a dictator. The instincts of the French masses were with him, though their ideas were vague. Louis Napoleon's own mind was turning back to the Constitution of the Year VIII. The officers were now firm behind him. When, on 17th November, Hübner was received at the Elysée, he saw hardly anything but uniforms. "The Army is on our side," shouted Fleury triumphantly. The assurance, the insolence of the Prince's entourage were, said the Austrian, "truly sublime." All was ready for the *Coup d'Etat*, and when the fact leaked out that Thiers had made an entente with the Duchesse d'Orléans to upset the Presidential Government, plans were set in motion to arrest the parliamentary leaders at dawn on the anniversary of Austerlitz. So came the *Coup d'Etat* which made the Prince-President Dictator. This new regime awoke much misgiving in England, little in France. "The President," wrote Hübner on 14th May, 1852, "is, in the most absolute sense of the term, the master of France." From thence it was but a short step to the Imperial Crown, which, though he knew foreign Courts would not welcome it, the President planned to assume under the name of Napoleon III.

¹ These quotations from Baron Hübner are all unpublished. The original is in the National Archives of Vienna.

“C'est un mariage de raison. C'est l'homme le plus convenable pour le moment.” That was Lord Cowley's view of the general feeling two days later.

On the 28th October he wrote to Lord Malmesbury :—

“The following is the latest version of the Imperial March. The Prince-President will send a message to the Senate on the 4th saying what he wishes to be done. His orders will, of course, be obeyed, and the decision of the Senate will be made public on the sixth Sunday, the 20th November is the day fixed for the Universal Suffrage part of the affair, and the public proclamation of the Empire is to be on the 2nd December. As to the title which he intends to take, or whether the Jerome family is to be included in the entail, nobody knows anything.”

(Jerome's succession was excluded by the Senate, which some thought) “a beautiful exercise of independent spirit”, wrote Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury on the 7th November. “My conviction,” continued the Ambassador, “is that it has been a ruse to get rid of his uncle without appearing to do so. . . . Jerome found out incidentally yesterday that there was a disagreeable smell of paint in the Luxembourg and went off to the Invalides.”

“I believe,” said Drouyn de Lhuys, “that the best thing is to make as little fuss as possible and to consider the whole thing as a mere change in the title of the chief of the State.”

But a month later the President had made up his mind. The first of our conversations shows him discussing his intentions first with Lord Cowley, then with Baron Hübner.

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

11th November.

If Louis Napoleon was to be Emperor he must be Napoleon III, for Napoleon II had reigned, though only for a few days : if his claim were founded on dynastic claims, as Louis XVIII had done, he would be Napoleon V, and that,

he said, would have been nonsense. In that case he would have dated his Empire from 1815. No, his Empire was not legitimate, it was elective.

What was his attitude to be towards the treaties of 1815? "I have every intention of observing them," but since they were galling to France he did not want to say so openly.

But was the Empire *in petto* to be the Empire of his uncle? asked Lord Cowley.

"*Mon dieu!*" he answered. "*Qu'est que c'est que l'Empire?* *Ce n'est qu'un mot.*"

Baron Hübner to Prince Schwarzenberg

Last Sunday, the 21st November (1852), at a dance at the Château de St. Cloud, I had towards the end of the ball a long talk with the Emperor Napoleon.

"I hope," he said, taking me aside, "that what happens here will not be displeasing at Vienna, and that we shall continue on good terms. My principles, certainly, are very different from those of the Emperor (of Austria) and of Sovereigns in general, but that does not prevent us being on friendly terms. I know, not officially but by gossip, that while England has nothing to object to the name of Napoleon III, there are prejudices against this name at Vienna. Now that astonishes me all the more because it is really from the side of Austria that I hoped to find the least resistance, since the son of Napoleon has been the Emperor of Austria's grandson, while England never even recognized Napoleon I. I am not so foolish as to want to do as Louis XVIII did who, by the figure he adopted, seemed to want to pass the sponge over a part of French history. I shall not do as he does, I recognize all the Governors who have followed one another after the Empire. I shall not do as he did, I recognize all the Governments since the Empire. But what name do you want me to have?" cried the Prince. "How do you want me to call myself?"

"But Monseigneur," I answered, "I think that no one in France had heard before the tour [you have just made] that you would give up the name you have always borne, that of Louis Napoleon."

"Ah, as for that," he said, "I have made up my mind to take the name of Napoleon. The country loves the memories of the Emperor, it is to these memories that I owe my elevation, I cannot deny them, so I shall take the name of Napoleon, and taking this name, I have no choice as to the numeral."

I might have answered that the very price that he attaches to calling himself Napoleon III seemed to prove that in spite of his denials, in spite of his assertion several times repeated that he did not want to make a false legitimacy of inheritance ; but his last words were so categorical and said—politely, it is true, but—in a tone so determined that I could scarcely have carried the conversation further on this subject without a lack of courtesy, even if he had given me the time to answer. But he suddenly changed the conversation and passed to another subject.

He spoke at length of his voyage in the South, and the spontaneity of the Imperialist movement, assuring me that he had said "No" to General de Castellane, who asked him permission to have acclaimed Emperor of the army of Lyons : that as for the prefects, he had authorized the cry of "*Vive l'Empereur !*" provided they did not provoke it.

All this part of the conversation was marked with that enthusiasm and that faith in his star which form the basis of his character. He had the air of one inspired, above all when he said to me "What I feel magnificent, what I confess satisfies my *amour propre* is that actually to-day—just think what that means—the French people themselves, of their own free will, bury the Republic."

I afterwards mentioned the phrase of retaliation which he used in his message of 4th November, 1852, pointing out to him that the phrase had not failed to produce a painful effect in my Court.

"Ah, what a pity !" cried the Prince, "that in the moral sense we were not talking the same language. It is just the opposite effect to what I wanted to produce. That is what I wanted to say : France was demanding a vengeance for her defeat. It is inevitable. To attain this vengeance, no government, Restoration, Louis Philippe, Cavaignac, could

have helped making war. I alone am possible without war and that is why the Empire is peace."

The President had the evening before received Count Hatzfeld at dinner and in a conversation that he then had with him, he said to him among other things : " The Empire will be *for* or *against* Europe according to the way it is received."

To this Count Hatzfeld answered : " Monseigneur, do you mean by that that you will hold out your hand to the powers to fight with them among the anarchist elements, in a certain eventuality, and that in a certain other you will support these elements abroad ? "

" Just so," was the President's answer.

Louis Napoleon was to be declared Emperor on 2nd December, the anniversary of the *Coup d'Etat*. As for his hopes and promises, we can judge them by an article which was written probably by himself and which is, in any case, the echo of his speeches. This article appeared in the official organ, the *Moniteur*, on 27th November, 1852.

" The Empire is the reign of equality and the protection of every interest ; it is democracy with strength, and the hierarchy of power, with order in work, security for savings, respect for religion, glory in the past, prosperity within our borders, dignity without. To-day, the Empire is peace—peace, active, fruitful, aspiring also to glorious conquests, but in the noble career of the arts and sciences where every victory is a benefit for humanity.

" The people, in spite of their good sense, have for a moment showed themselves to be dazzled by utopian attractions ; thanks to the wisdom of him whom they have chosen as head, they have not delayed to recognize their mistakes. Louis Napoleon has been able to destroy the dangerous influence of socialism, marching straight forward in the way of progress and realizing all that was generous, all that was practical in the wishes of the true friends of the people.

"Above all, and in the interests of everyone, it was necessary to re-establish order, to give new life to work and to confidence, to re-awaken the moral sense, to regain respect for religion and faith, to emphasize the authority and dignity of power ; our railways had to be completed, the rate of interest had to be lowered, and by decentralization to lighten the task of administration ; the army had to be decreased, and the lot of the soldier made secure ; justice had to be put within reach of the poor ; the workman had to be provided with cheap provisions, healthy quarters, savings and nourishment for his old age. In the country, the land tax had to be lowered, and capital provided to enable the agriculturalist to improve the soil, and wipe off his debts ; in short, institutions had to be provided which would have the double advantage of being useful to everyone, and baneful to none. Is there one of these needs to which the chosen man of the nation has not given serious attention, and which he has not also guaranteed to satisfy with that unfailing tact and that vigorous decision which for long have been unknown in France ? "

Within six and thirty hours, wrote Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury on 5th December, 1852, the Belgian and Neapolitan legations had presented their credentials, they must have had them ready beforehand ; and when Lord Cowley had gone to congratulate the *Emperor*, "The audience was very imperial" . . . but "he appeared to me for the first time in his life embarrassed". Did anyone really believe, the Emperor asked, that he meditated a descent on England.

"*Il y a des alarmistes partout,*" said Cowley.¹

It was Morny who induced the Emperor to accept the Czar's letter beginning "Sire" from Kisseeff.²

On 13th January, 1853, Lord Cowley wrote to Lord John Russell : "We had a most brilliant ball

¹ Cowley to Malmesbury, 6th December, 1852.

² Cowley to Malmesbury, 5th January, 1853.

at the Tuileries last night, but the Emperor seemed woefully out of sorts." The reason will shortly be explained by Baron Hübner. In the meantime Cowley put in a word of warning to John Russell with regard to the teasing and provoking tone of *The Times*: "I venture to preach 'leave him as much as possible alone' . . . he is capable of any rash act when excited by hatred to the Press and every day shows more and more how little his passions are under control."

This sentence was a reference to the engagement just announced of the Emperor to Doña Eugénia de Guzman, a Spanish lady of 27, daughter of the Count de Montijo, whom he married on 29th January, 1853. His courtship of this lady is one of the most curious chapters in the story of royal marriages, and is related with great frankness in the next despatch, explaining how the Emperor's ill humour at this ball on 13th January marked one of the great crises in his life.

Secret.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol

Paris, 26th January, 1853.

Monsieur le Comte,

Projects of marriage have never been happy in the case of Louis Napoleon. Habits contracted in the obscurity of exile or of prison and kept up later among his intimates within the Elysée, a distinct taste for independence, relations with a woman whose intimacy might be excused, if one may say so, by a devotion rare in persons of this kind and proved in adverse fortune, the impossibility of finding a wife in one of the great European dynasties, and the unwillingness which his pride naturally felt in seeking, still without the certainty of success, a bride in the lower ranks of princely families: in short the breakdown of all the secret but not unknown negotiations which were to raise to the throne of France the

last descendant of the royal house of Sweden ; such were the many obstacles in the way of those of his friends who sought in marriage the strongest guarantee of consolidating the new throne, and who hoped at the same time to purify a court which was still so deeply stained by the loose tastes of its unmarried master. They thought that a marriage would raise it in the eyes of the people : would add to the majesty of imperial power the halo of morality.

Those who saw most of the Prince, who passed as the men who knew him best, were scarcely under an illusion as to his intentions : for he had no idea of marriage. They knew, or thought they knew, that while ostensibly he was approving the efforts his kinswoman the Duchess of Hamilton was making, he was planning secretly to escape at the critical moment from the marriage bonds. In adopting an heir, he hoped to combine his personal liberty with the wishes of the nation who turned from the candidature of King Jerome and his family as a public calamity, and demanded a guarantee of stability in the birth of an heir.

It must be added that not all were in favour of marriage. Those in the Prince's circle who felt that in the reform of the court which would necessarily follow a marriage with a Princess who was respected, they themselves would be swept away—they were naturally far from encouraging the idea of marriage. They formed a cabal apart in the heart of the Elysée.

Such were the states of mind of the Prince and his friends in the autumn, and as late as November—a few weeks before his elevation to the Imperial throne, when chance suddenly altered the whole face of affairs. The Prince, whom they thought exhausted, at least as far as his heart was concerned, suddenly fell violently in love with a young foreigner. To the Ministers, and those of his friends who were sincere and honourable, this meant despair : but great satisfaction to the cabal of whom I have just been speaking. These hoped, those feared that the success of a new favourite would mean that the projects of marriage would be abandoned. Both were mistaken.

Doña Eugénia de Montijo, daughter of a *grand d'Espagne*

and of a middle-class English lady, had just arrived in Paris on her way back from Germany. Passing through to Spain, she did not mean to make a long stay at Paris. The best French society no longer appeared at the Elysée ; for the once cherished dream of the legitimists that the President might place Henry V on the throne of his ancestor had perforce melted away in the face of the reality ; the master of ceremonies, therefore, and those who arranged the pleasures of the Court of the President, tried to fill the gap made by the absence of ladies of high rank by foreign ladies distinguished for their birth and beauty : so the President, except for a few rare exceptions, lived almost exclusively in the society of foreigners. This fact explains how, as soon as they arrived, Madame de Montijo and her daughter were received in the *salons* of the Elysée and soon were intimate with the President.

He had seen Mlle de Montijo for the first time in 1849, and had not forgotten the noble and regular beauty of her features, the brilliance of her complexion, the elegance of her slight and supple figure, the thoroughly Spanish freedom of her manners, in short the charm of a mind which would essay anything, and the freedom of a conversation which recoiled at nothing. Now, at her return, Mademoiselle de Montijo, without losing any of her beauty, was changed. She had reached the age of 26 or 27 and her face wore an expression of gentle melancholy which her gossiping friends explained as the result of a strange, and almost tragic, adventure which without prejudice to her honour did show out the wild oddness and energy of her spirit.

In the last fifteen years, I have often met Madame de Montijo and her daughter, who travelled a great deal to the waters of Germany, in Belgium, in England, above all to Paris, to the Pyrenees, in Spain. But I don't know the future Empress well enough to hazard a judgment on her.

Impartial and dependable people who have observed her from close quarters depict her as full of vivacity, attractive, desiring to please and certain to succeed in doing so, when she wishes, especially in the case of men ; having more quaintness than wit, and more wit than good sense ; madly



DOÑA EUGÉNIA

From a drawing by the Prince de Souville 1852

in love with novelties, with marvels, with the unforeseen ; on the look-out for movement, whether in the physical or the intellectual sense, inclined for innovations in the matter of politics, one of the progressive party in Spain. An *advanced liberal* and *constitutionalist* by taste and by natural love of contrariety ; superficially informed, as one is when like her one has received one's education from the Nuns of the Sacred Heart at Paris ; capricious, eccentric, with ideas flying at a tangent, but with a force of will and a physical courage which one meets rarely even among the women of the people. For the rest, although the ways of young persons are extremely free in Spain, hers are freer still : this gives occasion to ill-natured remarks, but she is better than the gossips say. She has little concern for appearances : but no real faults ; furthermore, an ardent imagination, an inflammable heart, a heart which has already had romantic experiences, though distinctly of an innocent kind. She has every gift to please and fascinate her future husband ; she is capable of influencing him in a good or evil direction, according to the mood of the moment, capable also if love should be exchanged for strife to revive in the Tuileries the tragedies of times gone by or with a bold hand to tear up the bonds which are to attach her to the throne, and are worth a crown.

The Prince, already in love, arranged in the middle of November a hunting party at Fontainebleau. There it was that M. Drouyn de Lhuys first conceived the suspicion of a marriage while closer friends thought of nothing more than a passing liaison. But the President soon perceived that this game would need all his skill. Fontainebleau, meanwhile, having failed, the Prince, some weeks afterwards, gathered a large party together at Compiègne.

With a cynicism, which to-day makes them shiver who indulged in it, the A.D.C.s, the intimates rallied their master and her who a month later was to ascend the throne. They whispered at table, they wrote to their friends ; in these insinuations, in these notes, they made guesses at the time when the breach would be open, and the fortress surrender. These jests irritated the Emperor as his passion grew upon him, and his chances of success faded away. Always hoping,

and always disappointed, the stay at Compiègne, which was planned for only a few days, was prolonged to nearly a fortnight. The British Ambassador and his Lady, admitted to the inner view of something so far away from the ideas and customs of England, as the reward of the condescendence of their Government in recognizing the new Emperor, had the unfortunate honour of consecrating by their presence from the beginning to the end these efforts the object of which was the fall of the young Spaniard, the result of which was to raise her to the throne.

The Marquise de Contades, daughter of the Maréchal de Castellane, one of the few women in French society who went to the Elysée—and in fact a fallen angel, hardly tolerated in the society to which by birth she belonged—was the soul of the cabal who wished to prevent the Emperor marrying by giving him a new mistress. She said to Mlle de Montijo that, after all, remorse was better than regret, to which the Spaniard answered, “ Neither remorse, nor regret ! ”

These words were repeated in the *salons* of Compiègne and interpreted as a sign that the foreigner had something higher in view than the ignoble part which they had been assigning to her.

Meanwhile the Emperor, now the victim of a frenzy of passion, heightened both by resistance and by the constant intercourse of life in the Château, still seemed to regard a marriage with the object of his flame as beyond the range of possibilities. Then during a ride, while he was galloping beside Doña Eugénia, and thinking he was alone, though he was observed by witnesses who caught this colloquy, he addressed to her new and pressing proposals. Mlle de Montijo pulled her horse up short, and looking the Emperor steadily in the eyes, said : “ Yes, when I am Empress, yes.” The same evening, feigning to be indisposed, she did not appear at dinner ; her bearing, usually free, became cold ; her conversation, still freer than her bearing, was reserved and grave. Before the Emperor she was the image of virginal reserve and almost exaggerated propriety. But hardly had she withdrawn from her lover’s sight when her highly excitable nature once more asserted itself. This metamorphosis awoke

great astonishment among those who were witnesses of the drama. They saw two persons who hardly resembled one another. They wondered whether there was more art or cynicism in this game, played above the table, in the presence of witnesses as numerous as they were malicious, but played with extreme skill, and crowned with complete success.

It was after the scene in the forest when she had been daring enough to break the ice that the Emperor seemed to become familiar with the idea of a marriage. But these preoccupations had no sooner become known among his friends than a unanimous opposition arose against a plan which some considered an offence to the majesty of the throne, an humiliation to France, as a mistake, and a national misfortune.

It was no mere party opposition. The most responsible men, those who were most loyal to the new order of things were in the front rank of it. The Emperor understood that if he wished to announce the marriage he had no choice but to quarrel with all his friends, to dismiss them, while it would be impossible to replace them, and consequently he would make a void around him, or else he must stop short and give up the marriage. The strain was so great that there was not a moment to lose.

An incident dissolved his last hesitations. At the Court Ball on 12th January, the wives of certain Ministers who had made up their minds to think no more of the marriage, and said so distinctly, were impudent enough to be insulting to Mlle de Montijo. She complained to the Emperor next day, and the day after that, the 14th, His Majesty addressed to her mother a letter demanding her hand.

Such is the history of this love affair, the dénouement of which is so full of marvel and surprise as to remind one of the Arabian Nights Entertainments, and seems less a reality than a dream.

If I have thought it my duty to enter into details all gathered at first hand, and entirely worthy of credence, but made to figure in *mémoires* rather than an official document, it is because they seem to gain importance in their relation to the height and strangeness of the event itself.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

2nd February, 1853.

He thought that Drouyn de Lhuys was seriously threatened. "The new Empress cannot endure him. . . . Morny is the prime mover in these changes."

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

4th February, 1853.

"I have often heard that the Emperor hoped to hook the Pope into a visit to Paris by some concession or other to the Church. The object he is said to have in view is to abolish the celibacy of the clergy.

Who was to marry the Emperor? "Fould," the Emperor said, and added that nothing more was necessary than that Fould should ask him whether Eugénie was his wife, and if he answered "Yes", they were married. Somebody remarked that that was a very short ceremony. "*Tant mieux,*" he replied, and turning to the Empress he added, laughing: "*Le mariage sera plus facilement défait.*"

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

9th February.

(Rome had been sounded about the Pope crowning the Emperor, but the Cardinals were against it.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Howden

10th February, 1853.

Here we are in a strange state. The Emperor's foolish marriage has done him an infinity of harm in the country. It was, of course, ill received at Paris, even by the Emperor's friends, and it has set all the women against him. Clergy and army disapprove. The people believe that he has married his mistress. In general everyone sees in it another proof of the headstrong will which sets everything at defiance. (Giving Prince Napoleon a division was another sore subject.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

25th March.

"The Emperor is not at all disposed to allow Sardinia to be bullied by Austria." . . . The Emperor "would be glad to see a good understanding between all governments which spring from the same root, viz. the people, including his own among them; in other words he would like to see popular government pitted against the divine right of Kings."

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

5th May.

At present the Emperor's object seems to be to signalize his reign by works of public utility. . . . His ministers complain that he does not attend to business as he did.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stratford

8th May.

The Emperor thinks of nothing but his beautiful Empress to the neglect of all business.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

30th June, 1853.

I asked His Majesty's permission to return to our conversation at the Ball at St. Cloud about the Belgian marriage.¹

At these words the Emperor's features darkened.

"Certainly," he said, in a cold, icy tone.

"The Emperor, my august Master," I answered, "cannot have any intention of excusing himself from the consent he has given to the union of an Archduchess with the Crown Prince of Belgium. But His Majesty, informed of the judgment which You, Sire, have made on this union, desires that the Emperor should be informed on the true significance of a marriage which is strange to every political *arrière pensée*, and which is accepted by my august Master with the intention

¹ That of Prince Leopold (afterwards Leopold II) with the Archduchess Maria of Austria. Prince Leopold was the grandson of Louis Philippe, King of the French.

of contributing to the domestic happiness of the Archduchess Maria. The visit of the King of Belgium and this marriage will change in no particular either the alliances of Austria or the political principles which the Emperor will invariably follow.

"Here Louis Napoleon, who was listening to me with obvious attention, interrupted me, crying : 'But it is not less true that it is a revolutionary marriage.'

"There is between the King of the Belgians and King Louis Philippe," was my answer, "a difference which seems to escape your Majesty. King Leopold has not made a revolution in Belgium. Certainly this little country is the product of a revolution, but it is Europe which has sanctioned Belgium's existence, it is Europe which has placed Leopold on the throne of which, by the transactions at London, she has to a certain extent legitimized the origin."

"Then," said the Emperor, "why have you sulked so long ? For although Austria was sent a Minister from the beginning, she has not spoilt the King of the Belgians."

"If our relations with the Sovereign," I answered, "are lately become more intimate, it is that for twenty years he has had time to prove his wisdom and to win the esteem of Europe. To this, one must add a consideration of another order. King Louis Philippe, his father-in-law, represented on the Continent by his origin the revolutionary principle, by his constitution, parliamentary government. From both these points of view he could not be sympathetic to Austria which has as base right, and as principle authority. As long as Louis Philippe reigned, and there was not only close family relationship, but the two Sovereigns were neighbours and intimate friends, King Leopold belonged, so to speak, to the enemy camp. But since then Revolution has swallowed up the Orleans, and that has modified the situation of the King of the Belgians in the view of the conservative powers. That explains why an Archduchess can marry his heir, and why Russia is sending a representative there."

The Emperor was silent, and after some moments of reflection he said in a tone of conviction : "What you say there is true."

"Has the Emperor recognized Spain?" he asked me afterwards suddenly. I answered "Yes", which seemed to please my interlocuter, who has become very jealous since his marriage for all that concerns Spain.

"There are at all times certain fundamental principles," he continued, "which are, and which will always be the same under all the dynasties which have reigned or will reign over France. Austria and this country are two bodies too big to be able to brush up against each other without unpleasantness. So one has recognized the necessity of placing between them intermediary bodies, small but independent. So Switzerland separates us from your German provinces, Piedmont from those of Italy. I should like, when there is a question of combating Swiss radicals, or revolutionary elements in Piedmont, to hold out my hand to Austria. But I do not want her to aggrandize herself at the expense of these intermediary countries nor to increase her political preponderance to the detriment of France.

The Emperor expressed himself in the same terms to the British Ambassador. "Between ourselves," wrote Cowley to Clarendon, "the Emperor hates King Leopold most cordially."¹

¹ Cowley to Clarendon, 6th May to 9th June, 1853.

III

THE CRIMEAN WAR

THE Crimean War satisfied an old private grudge of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the English Ambassador, against the Czar ; and was prepared by Prince Mentschikoff, Ambassador Extraordinary of Russia. These quarrels originated at the Holy Sepulchre, where France traditionally protected the rights of the Catholics, whereas Russia, while nominally protecting the Orthodox Christians, was seeking to destroy the power of Turkey in Europe.

"I trust," wrote Lord Cowley to Lord Stratford on the 8th June, 1853, "that the Porte may be extricated by diplomatic means from the fangs of Russian manœuvres."

But the Emperor, though irritated with the Czar, and influenced to defend the rights of the Catholic Church, was dragged towards the war by the fact that he must side with England and not with Russia.

He said to Cowley at St. Cloud : "I cannot say how glad I am to find myself acting cordially with England. I desire to do so on all questions. Even if this crisis passes over."¹

Hübner had asked Morny to persuade the Emperor to keep peace with Russia and to try and calm England, but in vain.

¹ Cowley to Clarendon, 6th June, 1853.



NAPOLÉON III
From a portrait by Yton at Malmatson.



THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE
From a portrait by Winterhalter at Malmatson.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

10th October, 1853.

M. de Morny himself has informed us of the ill success of his *démarches*. He found the Emperor extremely grieved, grieved to see peace endangered, which was nevertheless the basis of his policy, grieved to be obliged to accept the English alliance which was unpopular with the country, grieved in short to have to call to his help, in case of a European war, the *coryphées* and the revolutionary party.

The arguments which Louis Napoleon consistently opposed to our intermediary were these :—

I cannot separate from England because the Northern Courts do not care for me. Without England, therefore, I should find myself isolated in Europe. I cannot even act on the English ministry to influence it in favour of peace, for fear of inspiring it with distrust of my sincerity ; and in that case I should again find myself isolated. Alliance with revolution is repugnant to me, and very dangerous, but I have no choice. Besides, in the eyes of the great Continental Courts, I am a revolutionary. They do not care for me.

He could get no further. M. de Morny added that he could not conscientiously advise His Majesty to separate from England.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

11th November, 1853.

Many persons here have supposed lately that His Majesty has become more warlike in his feelings. I am sure that this is not the case, and that he is so anxious to preserve peace that he would not look very closely into any arrangement (that is whether it would be acceptable to Turkey or not) provided he could induce the Four Powers to say to the Porte "you shall accept it". Indeed, the only anxiety I feel with regard to our own alliance with him is that the desire to see the question terminated should overrule all other considerations and that in the hopes of preventing war he may some day join the Northern Powers in trying to force war on Turkey.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

21st November, 1853.

"The Turkish Army," said the Emperor to Hübner, "whatever may be asserted to the contrary, is a very bad one, and will probably be beaten. I hope, then, that the Emperor of Russia will show himself to be both *généreux et sensé*. If he does not I shall be disappointed in him. In this belief I have not armed a single soldier more, or taken any extraordinary measures, but if it is found that Russia thinks of acquiring an inch of ground which does not belong to her I shall be prepared to resist her to the utmost."

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

13th January, 1854.

The Emperor said that from the commencement of the question he had made up his mind not to send a soldier to the East. He entered at length upon his reasons. He said that he must always take into account the possibility of a reverse and the consequences which would follow any dishonour to the flag, and he added that he should not feel justified in risking a body of troops in such an undertaking. If beaten they would have no reserves to fall back upon, and nothing would be left to them but to re-embark and make an ignominious retreat home again.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

24th January, 1854.

The Emperor rejoined . . . that what he had felt was that war was only to be justified by proving that every effort for the preservation of peace had been made abortively, and he thought that, being in the Black Sea, we might say to Russia that, as a last chance of peace, we offered to quit the Black Sea if she would evacuate the Principalities.¹ Otherwise we should declare war. . . .

¹ Moldavia and Wallachia.

The Empress also spoke to me some time of the horrors, etc., of war, and I could see from her manner how alarmed the Emperor is, and how desirous he is to preserve peace. I said that if His Majesty could show us any honourable means of averting war he might count on us.

(The Emperor then wrote to the Czar a letter which Cowley thought a mixture of fanfaronade and begging for peace, and three days later Lord Cowley found him in high spirits, thinking he had found the solution of the question.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe

31st January, 1854.

Until now the Emperor has had a great aversion to all idea of sending troops, but I hope that the representations of Sir John Burgoyne and the certainty of a safe basis of operations will make him come into our views if events make it necessary.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

1st February, 1854.

The Emperor believed in his own diplomacy and that he might make terms with the Czar.

"I will take care of the Turks," said the Emperor.

"*Mais l'Angleterre, Sire ?*" questioned Hatzfeld.

"*Ah ! bah ! l'Angleterre fera ce que je voudrai.*"

(The Bourse had been agitated and Morny was said to have lost seven millions. "If it is so, it will serve him right," said Cowley, "and his friend Kissileff¹ must repay him."

"Although," wrote Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon on 3rd February, 1856, "this persistence in Russian cajolery flatters him," the Emperor was gradually drawn into war. A letter from him to the Czar, which was practically an ultimatum, was published on 15th February. The Czar in his answer said that the Russia of 1854 will be found the same as in 1812. So came the declaration of war.

(In February, 1854, the Emperor proposed that England

¹ Russian Ambassador in Paris.

should have the command by sea and France the command by land whenever one or other of the combined forces were arrayed together.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

27th February, 1854.

The Emperor's idea (but it is a profound secret) is an attack upon Sebastopol by sea and land at once. It found but little favour with our military officers, none with our naval.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

2nd March, 1854.

Walewsky had written that the Duke of Cambridge wanted to be lodged at the Tuileries. This was not Cowley's idea, but the Emperor said : "The Duke's apartment will be ready for him at the Tuileries and His Royal Highness can do as he likes about coming in."

Moniteur

2nd March, 1854.

The Emperor's speech to the Chambers :—

The time of conquests is passed for ever. So let no one come again and ask us what we are going to do at Constantinople. We are going there with England to defend the cause of the Sultan, and, nevertheless, to protect the prescriptive rights of Christians ; we are going there to defend the freedom of the seas and our just rights in the Mediterranean. We are going there with Turkey to help her to keep her rank from which they seemed to be trying to degrade her, to assure her frontiers against the preponderance of a neighbour too powerful. We are going there, in short, with all those who desire the triumph of right, of justice, and of civilization.

*Baron Hübler to Count Buol-Schauenstein**5th March, 1854.*

"As soon as I know the ideas of England better," said His Majesty, "I shall send a plan to Vienna with entire confidence."

"I am sure," I said, smiling, "that you can count on the discretion of the Emperor."

"I know that well," was the answer. "We absolutely must come to an agreement as to our plans of operation, and that as quickly and as completely as possible. But in waiting, I can tell you that we have almost decided, England and I, to land our troops in Gallipoli. It will be the first halt; to decide what we shall do afterwards we must know the ideas of the Emperor Francis Joseph."

His Majesty afterwards spoke to me of the consternation reigning in Italy, not only among those who were frankly revolutionary but also among the honest patriots who profess the principle of nationality, and among which he counted many friends of long ago. "The article in the *Moniteur* had destroyed their hopes in so far as they thought they could build them on my help."

All this part of the talk was extremely interesting, but it is impossible for me to give it all, so much was added to the words he was saying to me by the sound of his voice, his gestures, and the very intelligent expression of his eyes, and, at the same time when he wishes, so frank and open; at least they showed his desire to convince me of his sincerity. His thought was evidently this: "Henceforth I ought to proceed with Austria, that gives me immense advantages, but it also imposes obligations. To put myself with Austria, and to remain the friend of the Italian patriots is hardly possible."

*Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon**17th March.*

Siege plans, the shipping at Sebastopol, the attitude of Prussia and Austria, the expenses, the question of a Turkish loan, all in turn absorbed his attention; he was now anxious that the Czar should be "duly punished for his outrageous conduct", and he saw the weakness, that the allies were working without a defined plan.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

24th March.

(The Emperor seemed sure of Austria) and hoped that Prussia would follow. "Heaven send it may be so," wrote Cowley, "or we shall have hard work of it"; but the Emperor was as sanguine as ever.

Napoleon III to Francis Joseph

Unpublished letter

24th March, 1854.

Your Majesty has long known how much I esteem and cherish Your person. It has always seemed to me that we were made to understand and feel affection for one another; for we are arrived at the same time at the head of two great Empires, chosen by God to lead the same ideas to triumph and to defend the same ideas.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

27th April, 1854.

(Fould and Morny were intriguing against Persigny because he (Persigny) was supporting England against Russia.) Persigny is an honest man, though extravagant in his opinions, and he is never afraid of telling the Emperor his opinions.

(Morny had been in Brussels, and openly flirting with the Russians.) The Emperor's weakness in regard to this individual is heart-breaking. He tells him everything, and I have no doubt that it is conveyed to Russia directly.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe

7th May.

I have had a long conversation with the Emperor to-day: nothing can be better than his conversation. He sees and understands that the Great Eastern crisis is come, and he is quite prepared to meet it, but he does not conceal from himself the difficulties with which we have, and shall have to contend, and I wish that I could feel that France was as decided as himself to meet it with constancy and energy.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

2nd June, 1854.

The Emperor let fall last night, but in so low a voice that I did not hear him distinctly, some expressions either that he expected Prince Albert at the Camp at Boulogne, or that he hoped His Royal Highness would come.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

16th June.

You will see that it is impossible to avoid letting the Emperor know whether Prince Albert will visit him or not. I am afraid that the Queen and Prince will be very angry, but it cannot be helped.

His Majesty said that he wished to speak to me as Lord Cowley and not as British Ambassador, and to ask me whether I thought an invitation on his part to Prince Albert to come and see the French Army would be accepted." (He was afraid that the Queen and Prince had an avowed antipathy against him.)

I found the Emperor in good spirits last night, though he does not expect any great results from the present campaign.

10th July.

(The Emperor was delighted with the Prince Consort's acceptance of the invitation.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe

23rd July, 1854.

The Emperor from the beginning of this Eastern Question has always had what he calls "his dreams", viz. that Austria should give up her Italian provinces and receive the Principalities in exchange, the Turks being indemnified in Asia Minor. He has more than once spoken of it to me.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

31st July, 1854.

The French agents at Constantinople had sent messages which made Drouyn de Lhuys furious with Stratford de Redcliffe.

Lord Stratford to Lord Cowley

17th July, 1854.

As the giant in *Tom Thumb* eats his breakfast overnight, so I find that to write at all I must write long before the messenger starts. It is all hurry and worry and flurry ! No time for recreation, nor for thought ; in fact, a thorough dog's life. (And, in fact, the Ambassador's nerves were anything but serene.)

(Lord Cowley then heard that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was furious with the French.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe

4th August, 1854.

"It so happens," went on Lord Cowley, "that I have means of seeing from time to time copies of letters written from Constantinople, and other parts of Turkey, which are opened at the French Post Office for the information of the Government, and I can judge pretty well from them how much the antagonism which is supposed to exist between the English and French Embassies occupies the French officers and colonists, and as they throw the blame with a natural partiality upon the English side, the Government is probably led away by the same idea. Then, again, the superior weight and influence which you must have with the Porte is a constant source of jealousy to those who represent France at Constantinople. In fact, they represent the conduct of the English Embassy in much the same terms as you represent that of the French—only they do not place it to the account of any religious motive. I have more than once explained to Drouyn and others that your position at Constantinople is quite different from that which our Ambassador ever has had, or will have again" (but that naturally did not calm the grievance of the French Ambassador—Benedetti).

There was a Lettre Vésirielle à Yacoup Pasha, Gouverneur de Jérusalem, on 3rd January, 1854, from which it is clear that sectarian quarrels between

Catholics and Mussulmans or Catholics and Orthodox had caused excitement.

The Catholics were undoubtedly too much impressed by small incidents at St. Jean d'Acre and Beit Djala, and the French were anxious not to give a reason to the Greeks for feeling that the Czar's protection was a necessity to them. Their only claim was to defend the Catholic interests. (Quai d'Orsay to Baraguay d'Hilliers, 8th January, 1854.)

War might come in either of three ways :—

(1) St. Petersburg might protest against the Anglo-French squadron in the Black Sea ; or

(2) That the Russians might go too far with Turkey ; or

(3) That the Russians might declare war if the Allies tried to force their will on Sebastopol.

Marechal Vaillant to Marechal St. Arnaud

1st August, 1854.

In reply to your letter of the 11th July to the Emperor, His Majesty instructs me to tell you to go to Anafa because *it is the only thing to do*.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe

9th August, 1854.

The Emperor appears by his letters to be very much disheartened, but he holds as strongly as ever to the Alliance. I wish that he would come back. His absence always tells on affairs.

Lord Cowley to Lord Raglan

9th August, 1854.

The Emperor writes very discontentedly from Biarritz at the march of events. Our Admirals do not hit it off in the North, and he is dissatisfied with us for not making a convention with Sweden, who wants us to guarantee her the possession of Finland. Of course, this is impossible. . . .

I have seen some letters written by St. Arnaud to his friends, and intercepted and copied in their passage through the post. He does not seem at all satisfied. He speaks in very proper terms of the English, but I suspect that he is not up to the task which has been confided to him. Intercepted letters which I have seen from officers and others show that he is not liked and I am afraid that we shall have the French Generals quarrelling among themselves. . . . The Government at home, you will see, is wretchedly weak. In fact, nothing but the greater weakness of the Opposition keeps them in.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

16th August, 1854.

The Emperor does not return until the 29th. One of the reasons given by Drouyn is that the Empress is in much better health, and that the Emperor is determined to give her every chance of having a child.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

18th August (after hearing from the Emperor).

Louis Napoleon wants (1) to see the Austrians in the Principalities, (2) Omar Pasha with his army in the mouth of the Danube threatening the Russian left at Odessa, (3) the Anglo-French Army in the Crimea, (4) the Turkish Army in Anatolia reinforced. . . . There is a report by telegram that the ravages of the cholera have forced the Generals to suspend their expedition to the Crimea. The accounts of its ravages in the French army, and of the demoralization in consequence, are very sad.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

30th August, 1854.

The Emperor appeared in good spirits and satisfied altogether with the prospect of affairs. He says that he answers for the destruction of both Cronstadt and Sebastopol next year without the loss of a man. He mentioned with a

deal of feeling the losses which his army had sustained from illness. I said that I hoped his opinion had not changed respecting the necessity of attacking Sebastopol this year.

(Meanwhile St. Arnaud wrote that his army was demoralized—listless, apathetic, careless of renown, expecting every moment to be the prey of cholera or fever. Even the bravest and strongest were out of spirits.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

3rd September, 1854.

The Duke of Newcastle tells me that tears stood in His Majesty's eyes while he expressed the pleasure which he received from this fresh proof of the cordiality of the Alliances which England proffered him.

(On 4th September the Emperor met the Prince Consort at Boulogne.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

Boulogne, 6th September, 1854.

Everything is going on admirably. The Emperor told me last night after the Prince had retired that he was more pleased than he could say with all that he had heard from His Royal Highness, that there was nothing so trying as making acquaintance as it were in public, but that the Prince had made it easy for him. . . . I have endeavoured to ascertain what the Emperor says to others and can assure you that it is even more satisfactory than what he says to me. His Majesty spoke to me also of the letter which the Queen had written him and which has given great pleasure. . . . The Emperor is in despair at not being able to get up a great manœuvre during the Prince's stay, but there is too much corn still standing.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

Boulogne, 7th September, 1854.

His Royal Highness appears to me to have rightly appreciated the Emperor's character, giving His Majesty credit

for openness and sincerity in his language, but finding an extraordinary lack of knowledge on many subjects, though he does not want for reflection and penetration. The Emperor seems to have questioned the Prince very closely on the theory of Government in England, and on the way in which the affairs of the country are carried on.

(On 8th September the Prince left by the night tide for Osborne.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

8th September, 1854.

The Emperor is very much pleased with the Duke of Newcastle.

I am afraid that the invitation to England has not been received as it ought to have been. The Prince told me last night that he had just told the Emperor that the Queen hoped to see him in England and to have that opportunity of making acquaintance with the Empress, and that the Emperor replied he hoped also to see the Queen in Paris. I hope that it was some awkwardness on both sides that led to this singular answer, but it is easily set right, I feel certain. The Prince said he should not mention the subject again, but let the Emperor take the next step.

(There was a suggestion about the Emperor having the Garter: the Prince almost shivered at the suggestion); but "Sebastopol is well worth the Garter", wrote Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon on 7th September.

Drouyn de Lhuys to the Consul-General of France at Bucharest

22nd September, 1854.

Send at once a confidential message from the Emperor to Omar Pasha to the effect that he should threaten the Russians and drive them towards Bessarabia, so as to prevent them bringing their forces to the Crimea.

Austria has undertaken to put no obstacle in the way of the Turks moving in this direction.

Omar Pasha can count on the Emperor for support.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

St. Cloud, 1st October, 1854.

My Lord,

After studying the despatches which you sent, I instructed M. Drouyn de Lhuys to give our Admiral the order of which I enclose a copy.

NAPOLEON.

Since Admiral Sir Charles Napier has informed the Lords of the Admiralty that an attack on Sveaborg is still possible, notwithstanding the dangers of the season, the Emperor charges me to convey to you the order to communicate immediately with the English Admiral, to examine with him all the chances of such an undertaking, and, if you consider they offer a likelihood of success, to do your utmost to secure it.

Further, the Emperor bids me say that, judging by past experience and the unanimous advice of artillery and engineer officers, if our ships are to produce any decisive effect on stone or granite fortifications, they must come within 500 metres of their objective. If this close range is impossible - it is a hundred times better not to engage at all.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

St. Cloud, 12th November, 1854.

My dear Lord Cowley,

I am delighted to hear that the English Government has placed at my disposal steamships to convey 7,700 men to the East. Please express my thanks to Lord Howden and Sir James Graham. Besides coming to the aid of one of the two armies, they will be useful to both, since both are involved in the same destiny and inspired by the same sentiments. With renewed expression of my high esteem.

NAPOLEON.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

6th October, 1854.

During the long conversation I had with the Emperor yesterday, he dwelt upon the great importance, not to say

the absolute necessity of an early understanding between the two Governments as to the operations to be undertaken next year. He evidently wishes to leave as little as possible to the discussion of those who may have the command of the fleets and armies and to furnish them with more positive instructions than has been possible this year. He speaks with great energy and determination of carrying on the war. . . .

Another idea on which the Emperor spoke, and which I have reason to think is now a favourite idea with him, is the restoration of the Kingdom of Poland. He asked whether we should object to it. (He thought it would be a good idea to have Poland as a buffer State, though he would not make it actually a matter of war to get it. He thought it more prudent to put off his visit to England for a little.)

The Emperor to the Naval Minister

St. Cloud, 16th November, 1854.

Sir,

The naval war which is now in process has suggested to me various serious reflections which I should like to communicate to you, asking you to submit my letter to a commission of experts. Afterwards you will report to me any proposals which they have made.

It is an acknowledged fact that ships are intended to fight against enemy ships and not against fortresses. Briefly, in a war as in a battle one should fight with equal arms ; with the exception of courage and skill, the chances should be the same for both sides. The same thing applies on land. A general avoids a battle unless he has a good chance of winning it. Similarly no one would attack fortifications with cavalry or fight a battle in the open without mounted troops. It is the same in naval warfare. The chances of gain or loss are the same on both sides. If I risk my fleet, it is in the hope of destroying the enemy's fleet ; I risk enormous capital, accumulated at vast expense, to destroy what has cost the enemy an equal amount.

But when a fleet attacks a fortification, the conditions change

completely. Not only is a ship inferior to a land battery, because the vessel offers a large target whereas the battery occupies a small space and is protected by battlements, but the stake is altogether different. In the case of a ship like the *Napoleon I* am risking five millions in money, 1,200 men, and 100 guns against an earthwork or a stone fortress, which have cost little money, and which are supplied with at most a score of guns, served by a handful of men. The chances are not equal.

What does this difference prove? It shows that if an Admiral realizes the responsibility which rests upon him and the dangers which he may incur without any commensurate result, he is considered by Europe and the army to be playing a part utterly disproportionate to his importance and courage. For instance, one sees, as in the Black Sea, 25,000 sailors and 3,000 cannon of the largest calibre unable to effect a breach or do any serious damage to the Russian fortifications. It was the same on the Baltic.

The serious inconveniences which result from this false position are both moral and material. The prestige of the navy is weakened. The Admiral, suffering poignantly from forced inaction and yearning to take the initiative, though reluctant to risk his fleet upon which the army depends both for transport and supplies, embarks on indecisive attacks, as at Bomarsund, Odessa, and Sebastopol; attacks which brought serious damage to our ships without equivalent injury to the enemy. The most trivial knowledge of artillery is sufficient to prove that cannon, firing at 2,000 metres against fortifications, will inflict not the slightest injury. The risk is out of all proportion to the gain.

As an example, suppose that ten ships with 100 cannon each and ten steam frigates with 40, fire on a given fortress. 1,400 cannon and 16,000 men will be engaged, at a cost of some fifty millions. Now, since only half the guns can fire at a time, 700 will be in action and, if each discharges 100 cannon balls or shells, they will fire in one day 70,000 rounds, which, at 20f. a round, will cost the State 1,400,000 f., without considering possible damages. Now, I ask, is this expenditure justified by a result which, at a range of 1,500 or 2,000 metres,

will be *nil*, or at a range of 400 metres may involve the loss of a portion of the fleet. If, on the contrary, they approach fortifications, they are exposing the State to huge sacrifices to which the possible gain will be hopelessly inadequate. As a rule it would be sheer insanity to risk the loss of a fleet for the destruction of a few fortresses.

What is to be done ?

My idea is this :—

Create a besieging fleet capable of producing decisive results, and reduce for the State the possible loss of men and money.

In accordance with my suggestions, floating batteries have already been constructed which, though they do not supply a complete protection against live munitions, are certainly a protection against spent balls, a most dangerous projectile for the navy. But that is not sufficient. I would select some ten old vessels no longer seaworthy. I would supply them with small engines of minor capacity. I would fit them with a very light mast which could be unshipped on the day of action, and cover their sides with iron plating after the manner of floating batteries. The armament of the lower battery would consist of 25 cannon of 60, that of the upper of 25 cannon of 30 ; 10 cannon would be held in reserve on the other deck. The weight can be balanced when moving. I would place no guns on the bridge. The armoured sides should be pierced with loopholes, behind which would be placed a score of men armed with carbines *a tige*.

Now to examine the effects of this new vessel and the sacrifice that its loss would entail. I have stated that vessels, whilst they remain at a range of 1,500 or 2,000 metres, will produce no effect, and that if they approach to within 400 metres the risk is out of all proportion to the gain. Place my proposed vessel, on the contrary, at 300 metres from the enemy, let her fire for ten hours from this distance at any given fortification, and she will have opened a large breach and shattered it from top to bottom. What do I risk to obtain this grand result ? An old vessel worth some 500,000 francs instead of one worth many millions. If it is damaged, I lose 60 cannon instead of 100, 600 men instead of 1,200 ; and

finally the exact quantity of munitions expended during the battle. This type of ship, stripped of its masts, its yards, its sails, and only partially manned, will risk much less and obtain vastly more.

From this day forward I would have every squadron intended to operate against fortresses supplied with vessels of this type towed to the spot by steamships or moving under their own power. They would give such squadrons an irresistible force, lessen the danger to our fighting fleet, and supply a new basis on which the navy can effectually join with the army in attacking seaside towns.

May God have you in His holy keeping.

NAPOLEON.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

St. Cloud, 22nd November, 1854.

The news which I have received from the Crimea and Bucharest convinces me that, unless we make the most desperate efforts to send reinforcements, our troops will meet with nothing but reverses.

I have 29,000 good troops that I can send, but at least 15,000 English are needed. And besides we have not sufficient means of transport. Write this to London. *The question is to be or not to be.¹*

I hear there are English regiments at Gibraltar.

I much regret the death of Lord Dudley Stuart.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

St. Cloud, 28th November, 1854.

My Lord,

Drouyn de Lhuys should have told you already that I entirely agree with the plan of disembarking troops on the Baltic, since without them we might easily lose our influence in the North. According to my information 10,000 men would enable us to take three important ports : 1, on the

¹ Originally in English.

island of Aland ; 2, the peninsula of Hango on the coast of Finland, which possesses a fine mountain ; 3, finally Sveaborg itself if, avoiding the main fortifications, we seized the little fort of Langorn, which it is said to be almost impossible to defend, and which would supply the key to Sveaborg. I have given orders to hold from six to eight thousand men in readiness to embark at Boulogne, but I assure you that I have no means of conveying them to the Baltic.

I had already anticipated the suggestion of the English Government by writing to St. Arnaud that, if Sir Rufus retreated, it would be necessary to remove the Army and carry the war into Asia.

As regards the Baltic it would be advisable to keep the port of disembarkation a secret, and for this purpose I should be glad if news could be inserted in the English newspapers that an expedition is being prepared either against Roya or against Reval, in order to create uncertainty.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

Palace of the Tuileries, 5th December, 1854.

My Lord,

I am much preoccupied as to the means of protecting our troops now in the East against the rigours of winter. With this object the Minister of War has ordered 1,500 wooden huts from Mr. Potter, of Gloucester ; but as regards the cavalry the case is more difficult, since in my opinion Mr. Potter's models are unsuitable, first on account of their very high price and also owing to their unwieldiness. I have since planned a hut of wooden framework covered with canvas, which would cost little and would be easily carried on board ship. I shall be obliged if you would communicate my idea to the Duke of Newcastle, since I should be delighted to find an easy means of retaining your magnificent cavalry in the Crimea, where they are suffering so severely from the inclemency of the weather. If you will come to the Tuileries at one o'clock to-day, I will give you the drawing and show you the model I have had executed.

NAPOLEON.

(The Emperor wanted the forces withdrawn from the Baltic to concentrate in the Crimea. He had written an able letter to the Emperor of Austria, but he was very depressed about the war.)¹

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

21st January, 1855.

I was with the Emperor for nearly two hours this morning. I do not know that he told me anything particularly new, but his conversation is always full of interest. His principal preoccupation at present appears to be to escape from all further negotiations with Russia. He expatiated upon it at some length and expressed more liking than perhaps will meet your wishes for the schemes of a protocol which he thinks will put an end to the negotiations at once. What he dreads is lengthened discussions which will give Austria an excuse for maintaining her present attitude and for abandoning us finally. The truth begins at last to ooze out. Drouyn has been amusing Austria with visions of peace in order to get her alliance . . . Austria has fallen into the snare. . . .

The Emperor enlarged very much on his old scheme—that we were a naval, France a military power, and that both nations were running into useless expenditure by endeavouring to maintain both positions. There is a great deal of truth in all this, but how is it to be remedied. He says : “ Do as I do. Resort to conscription for your Navy, with liberty to purchase freedom from service.” I told him all this was very well in an absolute Government. And that I feared there was not enough patriotism in parties to allow of such a subject being calmly discussed, and it was a subject calculated to irritate any sort of Opposition.

The Emperor is not pleased with Canrobert or the conduct of the war. He says that it is now admitted by his generals that the French attack on Sebastopol is erroneous, and that

¹ Cowley to Graham, 11th November; and Cowley to Clarendon, 7th December, 1854.

operations ought to have been confined to the English attack. This change, he said, must be made now, though it is very disheartening. He discussed a great deal what ought to have been done. . . .

His Majesty then launched into complaints of Lord Stratford . . . I must not forget to mention that the Emperor said that he would write to me on the subject of establishing a Council of War in Paris. I think, as I said before, a board may be of infinite use.

[Cowley had a long talk with Princess Lieven, who said that the Czar desired peace on account of the suffering in Russia, and that the Emperor's position depended on success. Meanwhile there was a crisis in England, because the Government had run the war so badly.]

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

31st January, 1855.

You will perhaps have seen in the papers a report that Morny is to be declared the Emperor's legitimate brother. . . . There is no doubt that Morny is working at it, chiefly through the Empress. I believe this is one of the reasons which has made Napoleon so anxious to return to France. . . .

Morny's influence with the Emperor is, I am sorry to say, gaining ground daily. I am told he has persuaded His Majesty to appoint one of his creatures, M. Magne, now Minister of Public Works, to be Minister of Finance, and another, M. Rouher, to succeed Magne at the Public Works.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

St. Cloud, 1st February, 1855.

Lord Palmerston's report, clear, logical, and in every way remarkable, has changed my views concerning the treaty with Sweden. I am quite ready to sign it.

I am glad that the Kikburn expedition is to be attempted.

And now for a request to which I attach great importance. Marshal Vaillant informs me that the Queen graciously intends to give my soldiers the same medal that she is

presenting to her own for the Crimean campaign. If this is the case, I shall be very glad if the distribution could take place as soon as possible. It will have an excellent effect and, combined with the exchange of other decorations, will allay many trivial jealousies.

NAPOLEON.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

2nd February, 1855.

The Emperor said that he had 90,000 men between Constantinople and the Crimea. They must be fed, and if we did not help he didn't know what would happen. As long as we had the excuse of not being able to procure steamers, he had nothing to say, but when such fine vessels could be purchased he was surprised at the refusal. If we found as many soldiers as the French, he should have no right to press us on this point, but he really could make no answer to those who told him that the whole expense of the war was borne by the French Government. . . . A regular transport system must be organized if the war was to be carried on with success in the Crimea, and if we could only find 15,000 or 20,000 troops to his 100,000 we ought to aid in other ways.

I have told you very fairly what the Emperor said. He spoke without bitterness, but very seriously and certainly in a very dissatisfied tone. I again say: For God's sake, establish a board at Paris where all these matters may be discussed. . . .

The language held by Napoleon here, and I am bound to add by the Duke of Cambridge, has done an infinity of mischief. The former represents the whole thing, I am told, to be a failure, Sebastopol to be impregnable, the Commander-in-Chief to be an old woman, and the Duke of Cambridge to be of his opinion, and the Emperor says that that is just the language which the Duke held to him. This has been got hold of by Morny, Fould and Co., and they begin to say that *peace* must be made, and that it will not do to squander French treasure and French lives for impossibilities. This language has not as yet made the least

impression on the Emperor. I tried him well this morning and warned him of the mischief his precious cousin was making, but the mischief must not be allowed to get ahead.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

4th February.

The opinion that we ought to make peace without taking Sebastopol is gaining ground—though the Emperor is not *as yet shaken*.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

17th February, 1855.

I write a line to say that there is a chance of your seeing the Emperor in the Crimea. Nothing is positively settled, but the idea is trotting in His Majesty's head and he takes such sudden resolutions that he may be off any day.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

22nd February.

There has been a precious blow-up between the Emperor and his worthy Cousin,¹ who flatly refused to accompany him and was, I am informed, told in consequence, that during the Emperor's absence he would be placed under the surveillance of the Police.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

25th February.

(There was nothing decided about the Emperor.)

Vaillant does not encourage him to go now, but, unfortunately, he was the first person to whom the Emperor spoke on the subject, and looking upon it only as a soldier, he replied that it would be a very fine thing to do. Since, however, it has been proved to him that the Emperor's absence might have bad political effects, he does what he can to dissuade the Emperor from going.

¹ Napoleon Jérôme.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

28th February, 1855.

The position the Emperor takes is this—"We must get out of the scrape in which we are in the Crimea. There is no plan of action there—no decision—not even a preparation for future operations. I do not pretend to be a military genius, but if I go I shall at least relieve the Generals from the responsibility which is weighing them down and of which I am not afraid. If something is not done, we shall go on from bad to worse. Army after army will rot before Sebastopol. It is a duty which I owe to France at all events to do what I can to put an end to the state of things."

(Lord Cowley said that this was all very well if the Emperor scored a success, but if not . . .)

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

Palace of the Tuilleries, 3rd March, 1855.

Please convey to H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent and to the Duke of Cambridge my thanks for the part they played in the recent accident.

The English royal family has been so kind to me that I could never doubt the sincerity of their feelings towards me, and it is for that reason that I value the evidences of it so highly.

Tell H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge that he can always rely upon my friendship, for I appreciate his noble qualities as highly as they deserve.

What do you think of the modification that I have suggested in the Austrian scheme?

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

5th March, 1855.

I saw Drouyn this afternoon : he had just been with the Emperor, who had volunteered to tell him that he should not go to the Crimea unless he could make all proper preparations in time, and until he had seen whether the change in Russia made any alteration in the present complexion of the Eastern Question.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

8th March, 1855.

(The Emperor seemed resolved on going to the Crimea.)

The Emperor spoke to me very seriously about the attitude of Germany which he thought was becoming more hostile every day, and I judge from what fell from him as from a long conversation with the Empress afterwards that his object is to obtain a brilliant success in the East and then to bring his Armies back to France to menace any point, and to trust to a blockade to bring Russia to terms. We shall never get him to engage in a campaign in Asia Minor. Among other things which he has got into his head (and it is not at all improbable) is the idea that Austria is looking on with secret satisfaction at seeing us in a deadlock in the Crimea. From this, therefore, he is determined to extricate himself. I do not know that I ever had a more interesting conversation than with the Empress afterwards. It lasted, I am sure, more than an hour and a half while the Emperor was occupied with Jerome in another room. Of course, her conversation was a reflection of the Emperor's sentiments, and I wish that I had time to put on paper the various conclusions to which I came with respect to her opinions on many other subjects than the war. But, with regard to that most important point, she said that she knew she had been accused of prompting the Crimean expedition. But was it likely, she asked, that out of lightness of mind she would advise that which placed the Emperor in danger? No, the fact was that the Emperor had a mental conviction, which she could not counteract, that he alone could retrieve the bad state of affairs in the Crimea. She had not been satisfied till she consulted Vaillant . . . (but when Vaillant was convinced that the Emperor was right, how could she but agree?)

"Oh, if Providence is against us," said the Empress, in answer to a warning from Lord Cowley, "nothing can be done."

When I hinted to the Empress that it was neither wise nor prudent to build on success alone, she replied that I was mistaken if I supposed that a reverse would lower the Emperor in the opinion of France.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

13th March, 1855.

The Emperor's continual hankering after the Crimea has turned all minds here to peace as the only means of preventing the journey, and I believe that, if the Emperor's consent can be obtained, any terms would be accepted that would enable the French Government to bring their Army away from the Crimea. Be sure it is their only object at the moment, for they feel that the Emperor's absence may be their doom.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

14th March, 1855.

The Emperor said that besides the destruction of the Russian fleet, he should like to see other measures taken for the future, and he added : " Among others, this is an idea which has struck me. I do not tell you that I have quite made up my mind upon its practicability, but it has come across me with other things. Why should not Sinope¹ or some other place in the Black Sea be made over to you. You might convert it into another Gibraltar. I say you, because you are a naval power. Asia concerns you more intimately than it does us, and you would always give my ships a friendly reception." This idea may cover more than was told me and probably aims at the establishment of a French arsenal elsewhere.

Nevertheless, I thought it right to say that whatever might be thought of the practicability of such a scheme if it was not seriously put forward, I should receive the simple idea as the greatest proof which the Emperor had yet given of his friendship for England, for that no other potentate that had ever reigned in France would have dared utter such a sentiment ; and it showed a disinterestedness of purpose, for which I should ever feel the highest admiration. The Emperor seemed much pleased at what I said.

¹ A Turkish port in the Black Sea between Constantinople and Erzerum.

We talked a little about the Crimea, the Emperor still lamenting that no fixed plan of operations was decided upon, and that so much delay must intervene before reinforcements could be sent and assembled there. He said that he was hourly expecting M. Merle whom he had sent to obtain more accurate information.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

15th March, 1855.

Madame de Lieven's tactics are beginning to tell so much so that Drouyn told me this morning that he had made serious representations to the Emperor against her continued stay here. He has got hold of a story of her having sent the models of some French guns to Petersburg. At all events she naturally reports home that everybody here is inclined for peace, which will make the Russians more difficult to treat with. Morny never has an audience of the Emperor that he does not go straight to her from the Tuilleries.

I do not wish to give the idea that because the Emperor does not listen to Drouyn's remonstrances he cares about her, but both he and the Empress have been persuaded that it would be an act of cruelty to send her away, and they will not believe that her intrigues do any harm.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

18th March, 1855.

Nothing that fell from the Emperor yesterday indicated the slightest change in his intentions. I had a very long conversation on the subject of the war, and the negotiations pursuing at Vienna, and every word that His Majesty uttered indicated an intention of carrying on the war vigorously and in person, though at a later period than he had originally hoped for. He admitted, however, that his latest accounts from the Crimea were very unsatisfactory. He said that

Sebastopol could not be taken by assault and that a different plan of action must altogether be adopted. He asserted that by the middle of April he should have 25,000 fresh and excellent troops at Constantinople, that these added to the 15,000 Sardinians would give a movable column of 40,000 men, well provided with transport and all other requisites to take the field, that he had besides 85,000 men before Sebastopol where there might also be from 20,000 to 25,000 English, and that there were 50,000 Turks at Eupatoria. He proposed leaving 60,000 French before Sebastopol and adding 25,000 to his movable Army. If we could add 10,000 and the Turks 10,000 this would give 85,000 men, a formidable army to manœuvre in the Crimea or elsewhere if it were judged more advisable. He conjured Her Majesty's Government to begin collecting all possible means of land transport—to write to Lord Raglan to proceed with method to organize the service for the different regiments. If only one regiment could be equipped in time it was better than none; if two so much the better, if three, etc.

There is no doubt that if we are to remain in the Crimea, and if Sebastopol cannot be taken, some real effort must be made to relieve the Army before it unless we are willing to make peace to extricate our soldiers.

I pushed the Emperor hard on this point last night, for I had been told that he wavered in his opinions. As to everyone else without exception, it is "*paix à tout prix*". Nobody feels secure, as long as there is an army in the Crimea, the Emperor will not go there, and, therefore, as the only certain means of preventing that, they will make any peace that it may please Russia and Austria to grant. The Emperor, however, is still very firm. He does not think the position of affairs at all desperate and he is not inclined to bring his Army away until "*un grand succès*" has been obtained.

(Meanwhile the Queen had invited the Emperor and Empress to Windsor, but the Emperor, knowing the Queen to be a strong Protestant, felt that it would not do to be in England on a Sunday.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

25th March, 1855.

I had a good deal of conversation with the Emperor both yesterday and to-day upon the state of the negotiations. He likes the idea of the neutrality of the Black Sea, but does not think that Russia will accept it. In general, he does not seem to have much hope of peace though he is certainly more pacific in his language than he has yet been. I said to him, that the question appeared to me to be in a nutshell : Were the two countries in such a situation that peace was a matter of necessity ? If so, they must make up their minds to make peace and get the best conditions they could. But if peace was not a matter of necessity, they should continue this war with energy, listen to no unsatisfactory propositions, and they might depend upon it that sooner or later Russia would be forced to make the concessions asked for, even though we might not be successful in the Crimea. There was one thing I said, which preoccupied me above all others, namely, that if we made an unsatisfactory peace, the Alliance between the two Countries would be looked upon as a complete failure. To continue it beneficially, we must end the war with glory. The souvenirs of the Alliance hereafter should be those of success and not of defeat. The Emperor agreed in all I said, but he asked what was to be done if Russia accepted all our conditions. Should we not be bound in honour to make peace ?

I replied that we might, and I trusted that we should put forward such conditions (I do not mean unfair ones) as Russia would never accept at the present moment. She would not consent, for instance, to a real and permanent annihilation of her power in the Black Sea, and this the Allies had a right to demand. The Emperor asked whether the question of Poland might not be brought forward. He did not mean the independence of Poland, but a restoration to those rights which were assured to her by the Treaty of Vienna. If this could be done, he said, the whole character of the war would be changed. It would become more popular, and bear more upon European interests in general.

His Majesty declares his intention of going to the Crimea if peace is not made, and of his determination to carry on the war until success crowned his efforts. I asked His Majesty how he could have any longer the slightest faith in Austria.

He admitted that it was nearly gone.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

3rd April, 1855.

The Emperor sent for me again this morning to complain of Lord Raglan's slowness and indecision . . . His conversation with me then turned on the old subject of transport.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

5th April, 1855.

His Majesty piques himself on his horsemanship *but likes to know his horse*, and I have been consulted on the possibility of his taking a couple over,¹ when Fleury told me he had heard from the Duke upon the subject.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

7th April.

By the way, the Emperor wants to know whether Her Majesty's Government has ordered the imprisonment of Polish deserters which the enclosure seems to indicate in this case? He thinks that it might be very impolitic not to encourage them to desert by the expectation of kind treatment. I said that some precautions were probably necessary, or we might run the risk of seeing the deserters turn out spies and re-deserting from our side.

Apropos of the visit, the Emperor is very much annoyed at Walewsky's proceedings, who wants to drag him on Tuesday to London to receive the Corps Diplomatique.

:To Windsor.

The Emperor wants to pass that day entirely and quietly at Windsor in order to make the Queen's acquaintance thoroughly.

(The Emperor went to Windsor on 17th April and in the course of his five days' visit quite fascinated the Queen. Lord Cowley was in attendance during the visit.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

23rd April.

I found on my return a very determined plan on foot to stop the Emperor's expedition to the Crimea. The Ministers were to declare in a body that they would not be answerable for the internal peace of France. Jerome was to insist on having larger forces than the Emperor was willing to confide to him, and Napoleon was again to refuse to go. At the same time it was to be represented to His Majesty that the finances were in a most dangerous state and the money raised for the purposes of the war already exhausted. The Emperor told me this morning that this game had been played unsuccessfully, and that he told his cowardly friends that they would not deter him from following up the war, and that the Government had his full permission to raise a loan in England where they could get as much money as they wanted. What an extraordinary man he is to stand alone against intrigues and difficulties of any kind.

I asked him when he intended to set out for the Crimea. He replied the first days of May.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

24th April.

The Emperor said that he must confess that the news which he had received this morning of the Cholera having broken out in the army of reserves had caused him to reflect. If his army *d'élite* on which he had counted so much was to be decimated by sickness, he should despair of success in the Crimea.

(The Emperor believed that the allies should assemble a large force in the Channel.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

25th April, 1855.

(There had been a long discussion about an ultimatum sent by Austria to Russia.)

" It is impossible for anyone to speak with more frankness and candour than the Emperor does on this matter. He says that he never in his life had so much difficulty in coming to a decision—that on the one hand it is impossible to overrate the advantages of having Austria with us, or the reproach which he should receive in France if it could be said that he renounced her Alliance for the sake of a few ships more or less ; but that on the other he could not shut his eyes to the fact that what Austria demanded was not that for which the Allies took up arms, nor an equivalent for the blood that had been shed, and for the treasure which had been expended.

He told me also that the difficulties at home were tremendous. How to form a Government when he went to the Crimea, he knew not—situated as France was, there was no public confidence in any man, or set of men. " What a difference," he exclaimed, " in your country where everything is lasting and solid." At the same time he felt more and more the necessity of going to the Crimea if anything was to be done there. . . . He thought a movement from Eupatoria most dangerous, out of respect for Prince Albert he had not argued against it at Windsor, but a look at the map would show that any marching from Eupatoria on Simpheropol exposed its flank to the enemy and risked being cut in two.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

26th April, 1855.

Changement de décoration.

We have given up the Crimean Expedition : at all events for the moment—and I believe altogether. The real reason I take to be that the Emperor has been alarmed at the state of France and what might happen in his absence. He has no confidence either in his uncle, or cousin, who would play him any trick, nor in the courage or devotion of his Ministers.

I gather this from the tone of the conversation. But the real reasons he puts forward are, that after what has passed at Vienna, he cannot trust Drouyn with hands untied to conduct future negotiations with Austria, which may end in placing her for aught he knows in an understanding with Russia. . . . He is much cut up about it, for which one likes him the more.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

4th May.

(Austria had proposed terms of peace which Cowley did not like, but which Drouyn supported before and after Cowley's audience.)

It is curious to see what a child the Emperor is in some things . . . I found him this morning utterly ignorant of all that had really taken place.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe

5th May, 1855.

Drouyn de Lhuys has been playing old Gooseberry at Vienna, and agrees with Buol to support terms that it would be disgraceful for us to accept, and I have taken the liberty of exposing him to his Imperial Master to his great discomfiture . . . The Emperor has come well out of the ordeal.

(Drouyn was, therefore, forced to resign.)

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

5th May, 1855.

As I have no private code or cipher with Walewski and do not wish to ask for that of the Foreign Ministry, would you be so kind as to send the following cipher message to Walewski through the English Ministry : "The Emperor asks if you will accept the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs."

Excuse the trouble and believe me truly yours,

NAPOLEON.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

Palace of the Tuilleries, 7th May, 1855.

I beg you to represent clearly to the English Government the consequences of the facts which I report briefly.

On 24th April, a letter from General Canrobert and another from General Niel announce that, in concert with Lord Raglan, they have decided to attack on 29th April ; that the enterprise is hazardous and that they may decide to attack the enemy and to besiege the place if the reserve army receives orders to go to the Crimea. I received both letters on 5th May.

On the 3rd, I telegraphed to Canrobert : " It is absolutely necessary that you abandon your defensive position and attack the Russian army. I will order the reserve army to proceed to the Crimea."

On the 4th, Canrobert telegraphed : " In order to obey the Emperor's commands I must cancel the expedition which is just starting for Kertch."

Thus you will see, my Lord, that I have not countermanded the expedition to Kertch, but that in Canrobert's opinion that expedition is incompatible with an offensive against the Russians. Now in this matter hesitation is impossible. On the 24th, Canrobert himself said that the situation is too strained to remain as it is for more than a fortnight.

To-day I have received from Canrobert a despatch, dated midnight, 5th May, which states : " The squadron has just returned and I am sending all available ships to Constantinople. Lord Raglan is awaiting instructions from London for his co-operation in outside operations. Consequently two of the ships which should have gone to Kertch are now employed in seeking troops at Constantinople and I strongly approve of General Canrobert's decision.

The expedition to Kertch would have been profitable sooner or much later, but to-day, when the safety of the army before Sebastopol is at stake, and when this safety can only be attained by a combined attack against the Russians, it would be madness not to concentrate our entire resources on the main issue and to cumber oneself with a fresh expedition which, however useful, would have no decisive effect at the moment.

I pray you, therefore, to urge the English Government seriously to send Lord Raglan definite orders for a general attack against the Russians and that not a moment should be lost since the position is critical.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

10th May, 1855.

As I have already written the entire success or failure of the Crimean campaign depends on the energy and promptitude of our offensive against the Russians. I entreat you, therefore, to remind the English Government that it is urgent that Sir E. Lyons should assist (?) Bruat to transport the reserves to the Crimea, and that Lord Raglan should receive definite orders to take the initiative.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

11th May.

Persigny's language to me is excellent but I am told that he says to others that he is going to convert the English people to peace. Walewsky insisted on the Emperor's giving him (P.) his orders : to obey instructions and to hold his tongue. The Emperor said that he was afraid the second order would not be much attended to.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

21st May.

(Of the Emperor.) His position is too hard, surrounded by men who do nothing but *din* the word peace in his ears, it is wonderful that he should resist them as he does.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

28th May, 1855.

(Cowley found the Emperor very much out of spirits.)

He regrets more than ever not going to the Crimea himself. He cannot understand the loss of life which is incurred before Sebastopol in prosecuting a siege which cannot lead to the fall of the place, and he says (with reason, I think) that when one considers what an extended line the

Russians have to cover from Balaklava to the Belbeck, it is next to impossible that there should not be some neat point which can be forced. . . .

In talking these matters over the Emperor said that he wished very much that you would send to Paris all orders you propose addressing to Lord Raglan. He says that it is absolutely necessary that the same orders should be sent to both Commanders-in-Chief, or nothing will be done. Not that he wants to prescribe from hence any movement to be made, but merely the object to be attained. "For instance," he said, "I was against the expedition to Kertch, you for it. If I had known that you only wished to open a way into the Sea of Azof, without occupying Kertch permanently, I should have made no objection. What I deprecate is scattering our forces when five thousand men might make the difference in a great battle."

* * * * *

The Emperor remarked to me that he should have been delighted if Lord R. had agreed to take the chief command. This led him to ask me whether Lord R. had ever formed any plan of campaign—if so, he should like to know it. Anything was better than to let matters remain as they are. I replied that I would ask you the question, but I was uninformed. I thought that both Lord R. and Omar Pasha were in favour of manœuvring from Eupatoria. The Emperor said that he had heard the same.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

3rd June, 1855.

I am just returned from a three hours' interview with the Emperor . . . I found him anything but pleased with letters just received from the Crimea. . . .

The Emperor begs that whenever we have reason to be dissatisfied with the conduct of any of his Generals, or that we disapprove their proceedings, we will communicate confidentially with him. He remarks that it is the only way to arrive at the truth. He remains opposed to Eupatoria as a basis of operations, but he will not interfere if the Generals prefer it to any other. . . .

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

6th June, 1855.

I said that the expeditionary corps might return after destroying Anapa. His Majesty replied that if anything was to be done in the field, it must be done at once. Every day added to the difficulties of the Allies. . . .

I never saw the Emperor more out of spirits. The loss of the French Army on 22nd and 23rd ult^o was very great, and the result in his opinion and in that of Niel of no importance. The loss was greater, he told me, than that of Austerlitz. He would not have minded it if it had been to produce a decisive result, but to see the bravest soldiers perish in such indecisive combats was terrible. It is plain that His Majesty has already lost all confidence in Pélissier.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

10th June, 1855.

The Emperor still maintains that it would be madness to storm the town¹ until it is invested. It is but fair to say that the opinion is formed on Niel's reports, and if the Emperor has confidence in him it is not surprising that he should object to operations which cost an enormous loss of life, while Niel pronounces them to be useless. The Emperor holds that during a siege the operations of the Army must be more or less in the hands of the Engineer-General, and at all events that the General Commanding-in-Chief is not justified in undertaking anything connected with the siege, that is disapproved by the General of Engineers.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

14th June, 1855.

As an earnest of the Emperor's good intentions, I know that at the Council yesterday, when some further complaints against Lord S. (Stratford) were made (I believe that he had caused Riza's dismissal), the Emperor took the oppor-

¹ Of Sebastopol.

tunity of saying that he was determined that where such great interests are at stake, these bickerings should cease, and that he had desired Thouvenel never to enter into discussions with Lord S., if he thought he had reason to complain : but to refer to Paris with "*ses pièces justificatives*". If they were founded on truth, the Emperor would then appeal to the loyalty of Her Majesty's Government to take the only remedy which remained to prevent the continuation of these dissidences.

Lord Cowley to Lord Raglan

19th June, 1855.

I have reason for thinking, but you may know better than I do, that Pélissier has given the Emperor to understand that he will not be interfered with. What is certain is that old Vaillant is in a dreadful stew between them.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

20th June, 1855.

I showed the Emperor your letter yesterday. He said that he had written to Pélissier to say that he must insist on his receiving his (the Emperor's) orders and executing them if they were practicable. If they were not, of course, he could not expect impossibilities. He still thought, however, Pélissier's plans were faulty. He would lose an immense number of men with no adequate result. The returns of the 7th showed above 700 killed and 2,500 wounded. It would not have cost more to force the Russian lines, but the result would have been very different. Pélissier himself did not count on taking the field before the autumn. What might not happen to the Army, from losses and sicknesses in the meantime ! However, His Majesty rendered full justice to the decision of Pélissier's character, and ended by saying that after all if Pélissier's led to the fall of the place, he would be satisfied.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

Palace of the Tuilleries, 23rd June, 1855.

My Lord,

I am deeply touched by the Queen's sympathy for our losses. Believe me, I deplore equally the death of brave English soldiers. The letter of Major-General Ros entirely supports my opinion. It is precisely because I believe that the positions at Sebastopol are too strong for a frontal attack that I desire a diversion. I have written to Péliſſier all that is possible to write on this subject and on 19th of this month he answers me as follows : “ *We will go to Simferopol when the time comes : of that Your Majesty may rest assured. But whatever your convictions may be, they would be modified if you would condescend to my point of view. I will obey, I will act, but it is I who will decide when the moment is ripe.* ”

NAPOLEON.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

30th June, 1855.

My Lord,

I beg you to convey to the Queen's Government my sincere regrets at the sudden death of Lord Raglan. Our two armies are so united that what affects the one cannot be a matter of indifference to the other. Also the loyal character of the English Commander-in-Chief was highly appreciated amongst us and we deplore his loss as though he were one of ourselves.

NAPOLEON.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

5th July, 1855.

The Emperor is dreadfully out of spirits. He is quite convinced that Péliſſier is not fit for the command, and he told me in confidence that he had decided yesterday on recalling him, but that old Vaillant prevented him.

I ventured to say that I thought old Vaillant had done wisely, and that it would have a bad effect to recall a General on account of a single want of success though he might be at fault in ordering the attack.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

St. Cloud, 6th July.

My Lord,

In reply to your letter of to-day, I believe that it would be highly desirable to embark at least 9,000 men between us if Her Majesty's Government would increase the means of transport. On the 15th, four regiments of infantry, one battalion of chasseurs, and one company of engineers will be ready to embark at Boulogne or Calais. I approve of all the other dispositions that you mention.

NAPOLEON.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

12th July.

The Emperor sent his confidential chamberlain Bacciochi to me yesterday to desire me to find out whether the Queen would mind the Duke and Duchess of Saxe Coburg being invited to meet Her Majesty at Paris. . . . The one object which the Emperor has in view is to make the visit more agreeable to the Queen by bringing Her Majesty into as little contact as possible with the other members of the Imperial family. . . .

The Emperor was much disappointed at neither the Duchess of Sutherland nor the Duchess of Wellington accompanying the Queen.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

25th July.

I asked the Emperor after the Empress's health. *Ou elle est grosse ou les eaux lui ont fait du mal. Malheureusement on me dit que les eaux causent souvent des retards !*

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

4th August.

They are doing all they can to concoct a child. . . . Is it true that there is a question of the Princess Royal not coming? It would break the Emperor's heart.

(The Queen arrived on 17th August and stayed for ten days. In the following letters, she shows what she felt about this visit.)

Queen Victoria to Lady Cowley

Osborne, Sunday, 2nd September, 1855.

Dear Lady Cowley,

When we went to your room in the Embassy, you expressed a wish for some prints from us to complete your collection and dear Mamma now sends you these; but being done some little time ago, the pictures are not very like. Winterhalter did a sketch of me in water colours this summer which is being lithographed, and when it is ready it shall be sent to you.

I shall never forget our delightful stay in France which I enjoyed beyond measure, nor all the kindness we received from the Emperor and Empress, and we have carried back with us pleasing recollections which time can never efface from my mind; every little flower we brought with us are [*sic*] such precious relics.

The night when we left I felt so unhappy, I could not thank their Majesties for all their great kindness which touched me deeply. It was with a heavy heart that I lay down in my cabin after we had left the shore of a country which had been so hospitable to us. Now that those bright days are past, they seem to be only a vision or a dream, so lovely that we can scarcely believe it. We had so many questions to answer when we reached home that it was rather difficult to answer them all. Could I trouble you, dear Lady Cowley, to remember me to their Majesties whom we all love dearly.

I remain ever,

Yours sincerely,

VICTORIA R.

Queen Victoria to Lady Cowley

My dear Lady Cowley,

Let me thank you most warmly for your kind letter and all the good wishes contained in the same. I am delighted to have such good news of the dear Empress, and hope and trust she will continue well. We look back with delight on our delightful visit to Paris, and are never tired of talking over all we did within the very pleasant but too short time of nine days, and shall never forget the kindness of the Emperor and Empress.

How beautiful the Empress must have been on the day of the closing of the Exhibition. I heard from somebody who was there and saw her that she had on a pink velvet dress. How I should have liked to have seen her, but I hope the ceremony was not too much for Her Majesty.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

9th September, 1855.

The *Indépendance Belge* has just given publicity to extracts from a pamphlet called "*Murat et les Bourbons*", written if not by, at all events at the instigation of Murat. It is full of absurdities, claiming not only the crown of Naples, but that of Italy—but still it would justify (in Walewsky's opinion) the Neapolitan Government in asking explanations of the Emperor as to his worthy relative's intentions, and how far they are supported by himself. The Emperor is much annoyed at the publication, and the Council of Ministers insisted on his taking some immediate steps to disavow Murat. Unfortunately he does not seem inclined to go so far and Walewsky tells me that he had, first alone, and afterwards in the Emperor's presence, a very disagreeable scene with Murat in which the latter spoke and acted like a madman.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

22nd September, 1855.

It is clear that the Emperor does not know what to do. He inclines for the partial evacuation of the Crimea as the last choice among many evils, but his mind is not made up, and

much will depend upon the answer which Her Majesty's Government returns to Vaillant's communications. He would be very glad if any scheme could be adopted for the more efficient employment of the armies. He does not object to a move from Eupatoria, but he says that Pélissier has sent him word that there is no water for a larger force than is there now. . . .

It cannot be denied that there is a great change in the Emperor's mind respecting this war. He now says that he sees no advantage in taking the Crimea, though he will still attempt it, if we tell him how. The results which we prescribed to himself on beginning the war, he looks upon as attained by the capture of Sebastopol, to be made binding and lasting by the condition imposed whenever peace is signed. He concludes therefore that our operations for the future in the Crimea *need* only to be defensive supported by a strict blockade.

Language so different from any which I have ever heard from him showed me that something else was at work in his mind, and I said to him, excusing myself for the indiscreetness of the remark that he must be frank with me, and with Her Majesty's Government, that he knew all the interest we took in his welfare. Was there, I asked, anything in the internal state of France that made him more anxious for peace than he had been. I gathered from his answer that it was there the shoe pinched. He was not very explicit, but he talked of the scarcity of coin, etc., and admitted that he should be sorry to apply for another loan, but that he must do so in the spring, if the war went on.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

24th September, 1855.

I had a long conversation with the Emperor yesterday on the Swedish Treaty. He is certainly averse to signing it as it now stands, but I think that he will not persist in his objections if you make a point of his not doing so. The fact is he does not see where the value of the Treaty lies.

Respecting Poland, His Majesty was very reasonable, but

he probably feels on this point that it will be a feather in his cap if he is enabled to force Russia to submit to those Treaties, which she was a party to making against France, and I am not sure that France would not wish him even to a continuation of the war to obtain this. . . .

Unless you know it from good authority I should be inclined to doubt that much *coquetterie* was now going on at Vienna between the two Emperors . . . The Emperor would not use openly the language he does about Austria, if he were courting her elsewhere. . . .

As to the Emperors joining in a league against us, I will never believe it until I see it. His nature is neither treacherous nor deceitful. I know that nobody converses with him who does not come away with the conviction that the English Alliance is the keystone of his policy. That France may not agree in this, that Drouyn out of revenge would do all the mischief in his power, I thoroughly believe, and God only knows to what events may drive the Emperor himself, but if ever he does desert our alliance, I will take upon myself to say, it will be under the conviction that nothing else will save him. I am not generally of a confiding character in regard to foreigners, but there is something about that man that always imbues me with a feeling of his sincerity.

I questioned the Emperor a good deal about his ideas of peace. They do not seem to me in the least changed. He insists upon the necessity of taking and occupying the Crimea, and blockading Russia until she comes to our terms.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

30th September.

After writing to you on Friday, I saw the Duke of Saxe Coburg, who confirmed to me what I told you in one of my last letters respecting the Emperor's feelings towards America. The Duke described them as those of a schoolboy, who, irritated at having been played a trick, would not be happy until he had paid it off, and he remarked, I think with truth, that that was not the way to handle great questions.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

13th October, 1855.

(Bourquinéy on arriving in Paris from Vienna) found to his horror that the old military spirit of France was at an end—and that even success did not rouse the nation—and that on the other hand he had obtained the conviction from his conversation with the Emperor, that if another campaign was begun, His Majesty would not be satisfied with less than a *remaniement de la carte de l'Europe*.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

St. Cloud, 18th October, 1855.

I have examined attentively the medal which the Queen proposes giving to the French army in the Crimea, and have only one criticism to offer. However flattering the intention of engraving each soldier's name upon his medal may be, I find it impracticable.

Firstly, considerable time would be lost in procuring all the names, in writing lists, and in engraving them.

Secondly, when the medals arrive, some of the soldiers would be dead, others would have exchanged their corps and their garrison, and consequently the distribution would be extremely complicated.

All these inconveniences would be obviated by allowing each soldier to have his own name engraved. By this means the difficulty is minimized for the army at the moment; otherwise it would be greatly increased by the nine thousand discharged soldiers whom I have just allowed to return to their homes. In this connection I believe that, with regard to the exchange of crosses, I forgot to propose to the Queen's Government that each English regiment should receive ten medals to be awarded to those who have served with most distinction.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

24th October.

His Majesty is fast coming to the conviction that public opinion in France will not support him much longer in this war, and I trust if it is to go on, the object, if not its seat must

be changed. The Emperor's anxiety to bring home a part of his army, his repugnance to ask for another loan, his solicitude that the troops whose time of service has expired should have at once the Queen's medals may be all traced to the same source, a wish to conciliate and make the war more popular, and what I am going to recount now of another part of his conversation the other day will show more than anything in what direction the wind blows. . . .

Among the dreams which crossed his imagination, for he admitted they were but dreams, was the possibility of saying to Europe that events had clearly proved that the balance of power of Europe was neither established nor could it be maintained under the Treaties of 1815, and that it was necessary to call a congress in order to resettle the map.

I observed at once that we should (I thought) have the gravest objections to such a course were it even otherwise practicable—that questions would be raised, much more likely to lead to quarrels than to a good understanding, and that I could not conceive anything less likely to lead to the object which the Emperor professed to have in view.

His Majesty replied that he was quite aware of all the difficulties which must be encountered and that they could only be overcome by a previous understanding, first between France and England, and then between those two and Austria and Prussia: but he thought advantages might be offered to the two latter which might induce them to view his project favourably. Without them, he admitted, nothing could be done. He did not mention what benefit he proposed to Austria, but when I tell you that he talked of giving the Electorate of Hesse to Prussia (he had understood, he said, that the elector having no children, would sell it, as if there were no collateral heirs) and enlarging the dominions of the King of Sardinia. You may judge whether Austria is to give into this wild scheme. The independence, if not of Poland, at all events of the Duchy of Warsaw, was another element of the arrangement. He did not say a word about France, but it was, of course, to be inferred that she was not going to help to strengthen her neighbours and get nothing herself.

I only mention this to show what now occupies the Emperor's thoughts, namely by what means he can satisfy France if the war is to be prolonged . . . Unfortunately when the Emperor once gets an idea into his head, he broods upon it, until all the difficulties disappear in his imagination.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

St. Cloud, 28th October, 1855.

I enclose two despatches from Marshal Pélissier. In the first you will see that it is impossible to leave Eupatoria for lack of water. In the second you will find the proof that, whereas Lord Clarendon expresses to you his firm hope of creating a grand diversion at Eupatoria, the English cavalry has already received orders to evacuate the place.

You will see how difficult it is to alter a general plan by common consent. Whilst we are discussing here, the men on the spot are acting from a different standpoint.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

27th October, 1855.

The Emperor wished to convey "that every effort should be made during the next six weeks to dislodge the Russians from their positions, but if that was found to be impossible, it became clear that if the war was to be continued a blow must be struck elsewhere, and the two Governments ought calmly to consider what they would do next spring".

This appeared to me very reasonable and I asked the Emperor whether I was to understand that he would not object to leaving all his troops in the Crimea until the spring. I could obtain no positive answer, and when I asked him to sanction operations calculated to dislodge the Russians, I met if not with a refusal, at all events with so much repugnance that it almost amounted to a "No".

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

30th October, 1855.

The following is the programme which the Emperor thought might form a basis of peace to which both Austria and the Allies could bind themselves.

- 1st. The Provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia to be united in one Government under a foreign Prince, reserving the Porte's rights of suzerainty.¹
- 2nd. Rectification of the line of frontier so as to restore to the Principalities the territory lost by the Treaty of Adrianople now incorporated with Bessarabia. This would deprive Russia of all jurisdiction over the navigation of the Danube.
- 3rd. Neutralization of the Black Sea.
- 4th. Settlement of the Religious Question without the interference of Russia.

Besides this the Tripartite Treaty for the Guarantee of the Ottoman dominions.

(This was all said to Bourqueney. Does it not amount to the creation of Bulgaria ?

Lord Lansdowne saw the Emperor on 31st October, 1855.)

11th November, 1855.

(Lord Cowley understood that the Emperor did not want to talk further to him—no wonder!—and had asked for the Duke of Cambridge to come to Paris. The Duke arrived on 14th November. Next day the Emperor made a speech at the close of the exhibition in which the desire for peace was very openly—Lord Cowley said crudely!—expressed. In the evening he saw the Duke of Cambridge and conveyed to him that as the English Government proposed nothing, the generals nothing, and yet none accepted his own proposals, there was little sense in going on with the war. The day after Prince Napoleon made a speech on the Crimea without the slightest reference to the English Navy or Army having been there at all.)

¹ This is the first indication of one of the Emperor's favourite ideas : the creation of Roumania.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

18th November, 1855.

The Emperor said that the object of Austria was clear. She was in a most embarrassing situation from which she sought to escape. Hated by Russia, viewed with suspicion by the belligerent Powers, and treated with coldness and reserve by Prussia and Germany, her position had become intolerable from its isolation. She fancied she saw a way out without danger to herself. By declaring at last that she gave all her moral support to the belligerents, she hoped to regain a place in Europe without engaging in the war, and the question which the belligerents had to ask themselves was, whether that moral support was worth having. Now in his opinion it was worth a great deal to them.

Austria might hope not to be involved in war but was she sure of it? From the moment that the rupture of diplomatic relations with Russia was assured she could not be certain of peace for one day. Moreover, after so public an expression of her opinion there was every hope that she would be followed by Prussia and Germany. "In fact," said His Majesty, "it is the realization of my speech. . . ."

The Emperor said that he really did not see what more could be asked of Russia than was contained in the Vienna memorandum. It reserved besides the right of the Allies to put forward further demands. He must own, however, that he forgot all minor considerations in his great anxiety to see Austria pronounce herself so positively. To him a rupture of diplomatic relations between Austria and Russia was at this moment more valuable than a declaration of war by Austria, for in the latter case he must prepare to go to her assistance, and this he was hardly prepared to do. . . .

I will turn to another matter on which the Emperor spoke to me, namely his anxiety for the future, if the war is to be continued. He would not conceal from me, he said, that France could or would not continue the enormous expense she was now incurring and he again dwelt on the possibility of a restricted warfare. Why, he urged again, should we not bring our troops home, leaving what was necessary to hold Kamiesch and Kertch?

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon*

25th November, 1855.

You never saw such an extraordinary creature as the King of Sardinia. He does not appear to have made a very favourable impression. He "Mon chers" everybody the first time he sees them. "*Bon jour, mon cher, comment allez-vous?*" was His Majesty's greeting to me to-day. Walewski gave me the following comical account of the reception by the King of the Emperor's Ministers yesterday. To Fould, "Ah! vous êtes le Ministre d'Etat. *Bon jour, mon cher,*" turning to Abbatucci, "*Qui êtes-vous? Le Garde des Sceaux—vous devez avoir beaucoup à faire—beaucoup.* Et vous aussi," turning to Walewski, "*vous avez beaucoup à faire, mon cher*"—and so on to the whole of them. He sent for Walewski afterwards and began talking about his religious differences with Rome.¹ "*Voyez-vous, mon cher,*" he said, "*tous les prêtres sont de la canaille!* Si on avait suivi mon conseil je les aurai fait fusiller tous! *Ils ne méritent pas autre chose—la canaille!* *Le jour viendra où on se repentira de les avoir laissé échapper!* *Il fallait les faire fusiller!*" As His Majesty remains here two or three days I cannot of course do anything to *fêter* him, but I begged Villa Marina to tell him that I have the intention of asking to be honoured by receiving him at the Embassy. It appears that he hates balls, theatres, etc., and thinks of nothing but shooting and reviews.

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon*

10th December, 1855.

I do not think he (the Emperor) is what is called anxious for peace, or that he thinks that a peace made now would be lasting. He is not at all blind to the fact that those who are most clamorous for peace now would throw that peace in his teeth if they could hereafter. But in fact he cares for nothing but the third point. If the neutralization of the Black Sea was fully granted he would be ready to make peace

¹ Victor Emmanuel had suppressed Sardinian Monasteries and had been in bad odour with the Pope. Letters reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

immediately. This arises partly from great insouciance respecting the East in general, and partly from a supposition that the first and second points regard Germany more exclusively, to whom we owe nothing, but more particularly that the settlement of the third point is the greatest *military* satisfaction the allies can have. These reasons would, I think, make him under *present circumstances* less tenacious regarding the other points than we should like. At the same time I must add that these are rather appreciations of mine, than positive dicta of his. But if this third point cannot be settled to his satisfaction, I feel sure that he is ready and willing to pursue the war with vigour. His theory is this, "I have no fear that France will not respond to my call whenever I make it, but in order to make it I must feel in my *conscience* that the sacrifices which I ask for in men and money are called for. If Russia refuses terms thought fair by Austria, on Russia will fall the responsibility of carrying on the war. For this reason I am most anxious that Austria should send her ultimatum to St. Petersburg. It will strengthen my hand. I am very anxious for the Council of War. If after due consideration it is thought that anything can be done in the Crimea, I am for remaining in the Crimea. If, on the contrary, nothing can be done there, I cannot conscientiously ask for further sacrifices of France to maintain an army that can effect nothing more. Then will come the consideration what can be done elsewhere—but be assured of one thing, that I am not afraid of appealing to France when I can do it with a clear conscience. But I must not deceive her."

But although the Emperor is willing to pursue the war in the Crimea, if it shall be so determined, and on the whole would be glad if it could be clearly demonstrated that something could be done there, he is very much occupied with a project for an attack on the north. He is convinced that Cronstadt may be destroyed and St. Petersburg taken without much difficulty provided that means can be found of conveying there 60,000 or 80,000 men *at once*. Success depends on this, he had his whole plan laid out—the place of landing, etc., and he will no doubt develop it all before the Council of War.

With regard to his Ministers the Emperor spoke in terms that showed that he was not disposed either to be their dupe or their tool. In fact it was plain to see that he had no confidence in them. He lamented as he had done before the impossibility of finding men to serve him in whom the country would have confidence, and at last he said with an animation that I have seldom seen in him, “but only let me see my way clearly—let me have a thorough conviction that I am in the right, and if my Ministers oppose me—*voyez-vous—je les briserais comme du verre—j’aurais le pays avec moi.*”

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

26th November, 1855.

The Emperor continued: “Now pray understand me. I have no intention of accepting dishonourable conditions of peace. I shall be glad if peace can be made, but the terms must be acceptable. Nothing, I am afraid, which we can get will repay us for the sacrifices which we have made. The four points fully developed would not repay us, and yet both Governments can find nothing better to ask.”

I replied that he quite forgot the future benefits which we were to reap. It was no small thing to have saved Turkey from the grip of Russia.

(Cavour had proposed to join the Allies in the hope of obtaining later a *quid pro quo*. His King, in the guise of Allied Sovereign, paid visits to Paris and London in the autumn of 1855.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

Private and confidential.

10th December, 1855.

There has been the devil to pay at Compiègne in consequence of the King of Sardinia’s indiscreet Cancans. He has brought over stories of Palmerston’s language respecting the Emperor which has raised not without reason the Imperial ire—but the word is he has also reported a conversation with the Prince which the Emperor has taken much to heart.

The King's story about Palmerston is—that the latter said that His Imperial Majesty was in the hands of a parcel of adventurers, that he could not stand up against them, and that yielding to their exigencies, he was ready to conclude an ignominious peace—that England did not care a fig for the French—that the Emperor might withdraw his army from the Crimea if he liked—but that if the Sardinians would remain firm, they and the British troops were strong enough to carry on the war alone, and bring it to an honourable conclusion.

The language reported of the Prince was that it behoved England to be very watchful of any alliance between France and Austria for that they might then turn round upon England and dictate to her hereafter.

The Emperor came open-mouthed to me as soon as this was told him, and I never saw him more hurt or annoyed. He said that he had done nothing to merit these reproaches—that he was as determined as we were to obtain honourable conditions of peace, and to prosecute the war until they were obtained. It was a mere question of strategy whether the war should be pushed in the Crimea or elsewhere, a point which could only be determined by the Council of War.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

9th January, 1856.

I alluded yesterday to all the intrigues which were on foot in Paris to compel His Majesty to make peace. He said that he was well aware of them, but that he should know how to meet them all. I said that it was not on His Majesty's account that I felt anxious about them, but because these people were defeating their own purposes, for in making it believed that the war was carried on to satisfy England alone, they were encouraging Russia to persevere in the hope of disuniting the Allies. The Emperor said that he had never had but one policy, and he would give me a proof of it by showing me a correspondence which was certainly never intended for my eyes. He then took me out of his drawer a letter from Drouyn de Lhuys dated 27th October, 1853, in which

Drouyn laid down his ideas of what should be the policy of France. It is a long and no doubt an able letter, throwing great doubts upon the advantage of an Alliance with England, and advocating an Alliance with the Continental Powers, when England must follow in the wake, and make such a peace as might suit the Continental Powers to dictate. A long catalogue of facts are cited to show that England had but little respect for France where her own interests are concerned. Many of these facts are entirely false or falsely coloured, many of them exaggerated, and none of them to be compared to the tricks which Drouyn himself played us. The upshot of the letter was : " Make use of England as long as it suits you—form your Continental alliances without reference to her, and shake her off whenever she stands in your way."

The Emperor's answer, which he also showed me, was straightforward and manly. He butters Drouyn a little for his talents and the way in which he had conducted negotiations up to this time, but he tells him plainly that the basis of his policy was a complete understanding with England but that if other countries could be drawn into that alliance, he should be very glad. He then tells Drouyn that the fault of his character (Drouyn's) is suspicion.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

22nd January, 1856.

I told His Majesty the decision to which the Cabinet would probably come on his propositions and he seemed satisfied. I then informed him of your desire to have the peace negotiations carried on in Paris. This evidently gave him extreme pleasure, and he desired me to say how much he appreciated the confidence thus evinced. . . .

The general tenor of his language was to this effect : that from all he heard the Emperor of Russia was determined to make peace, but that there was still a strong feeling in Russia to continue the war, particularly in the Imperial Guard, and that if the Western Powers insisted on the immediate acceptance of the particular conditions the Emperor would

be unable to comply, but that there could be no doubt they would be obtained in conference : that he (Louis Napoleon) was most anxious that preliminaries should be signed at Vienna and an armistice entered into, the duration of which should be defined.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

24th January, 1856.

I am deeply distressed to hear from Walewski that you are annoyed at what I said last evening.

I was delighted to learn that Lord Clarendon consented to hold the conference in Paris and I am so grateful for this kindness, that I wrote yesterday to Savigny to ask him to thank Lord Clarendon personally on my behalf. What I wished to explain the other evening is that my wish that the conference should be held in Paris was not due to *amour propre* but solely for the advantage of the cause.

I am too good a friend of England to wish to prejudice in any way the rights of the English Cabinet.

Pray accept my explanation with the assurance of my friendship.

NAPOLEON.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

31st January, 1856.

The Emperor expressed a great wish that the negotiations for peace should be pushed on as rapidly as possible. He said that the same desire prevailed at St. Petersburg, where it was said that the present state of uncertainty could not be long endured.

(Cowley and the Emperor decided that France and England must enter the Peace Conference in complete agreement.)

From this we went on to the position of the Turkish Empire, which His Majesty said preoccupied him much, and he could not help seeing the Emperor Nicholas' words very true, that it is impossible to galvanize a dead man to life. In fact we were killing him by inches. The remedy, however,

which His Majesty proposes, if his premises are true, will only help us to assist at the funerals, for he asks under what excuses the Allies can continue to occupy Constantinople for a limited time. . . .

Though willing to occupy the Sultan's capital, he is quite against forcing the Turks to take the first step towards greater civilization by abolishing punishment in cases of apostasy. His Majesty said that much as he despised the whole system of Turkish Government, he yet felt that it must be supported, and that as its sole strength lay in its religion, it would not do to attack a fundamental article of that religion. . . .

The Emperor referred to the article in *The Times* the other day. He said that it had given him great annoyance because it indirectly asserted one of two things—either that he was an imbecile [*sic*] and employed men of whose characters and pursuits he knew nothing, or that he was something worse, that if that he connived at his Ministers making use of the intelligence which they received to be beforehand with the public. Now, His Majesty said, he would speak to me with perfect frankness. There was one man against whom, he admitted, there was much to be said, and that man he had dismissed (*eloigné*) from his immediate Councils on that account—although from personal feeling for him he had placed him in another prominent place. He alluded to Morny. He knew also all that was said against his other Ministers, but he did not believe in the truth of the aspersions cast upon them. . . .

Some of his naïvetés were such as to appear almost unaccountable. For instance, he will not make Morny a Minister, but he sees nothing in making him President of the *Corps Legislatif*. Because Morny denies being mixed up in any Bourse transactions, His Majesty believes him. He finds out that Morny is in correspondence with Gortschakoff, and he thinks that Morny shows him all that passes between them. He sets spies on Walewsky, and because no *agent de change* goes to the Quai d'Orsay he believes that Walewsky has nothing to say to the Bourse and so on.

I cannot help asking myself: is this shrewd, penetrating man really deceived, or is he trying to throw dust in my eyes? When I have reflected a little more, I will tell you the conclusion to which I have come, but there is an air of candour and honesty in his whole tone and manner that I would fain believe cannot cover deceit. Perhaps he has made up his mind that nothing can cleanse the Augean stable. . . .

Over and over again the Emperor has said to me that there is not a Statesman in France, and here at all events he speaks truth.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

31st January, 1856.

The Empress asked me the day before yesterday at the Ball whether I had been satisfied with everything I heard from the Emperor on the previous Sunday. I told her that I was always satisfied with everything I heard from the Emperor, who to me was the soul of honour and loyalty, but that I was not, and could not be satisfied with the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers. She talked over the whole thing with a great deal of calm and good sense, lamenting the dearth of honesty in France and the impossibility in which the Emperor was of obtaining better persons round him.

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

Palace of the Tuilleries, 4th February, 1856.

I have studied with deep interest the reflections of the English Government on the plan of campaign we should adopt if the peace negotiations fail. With one exception, which I will mention later, I agree with them entirely. Marshal Vaillant has just written to ask that the largest number of available troops should be sent to Eupatoria as soon as possible. He gives the order to seize Sack and to establish there a depot which he will be allowed to develop even during the armistice and which will serve as a base for future operations. Finally he urges Marshal Pélissier to be ready to take the field in April, that is to say, the moment

the armistice expires. As to the operations on the Baltic I have no remarks to make ; but the point to which I call the most serious attention of the English Government concerns the plan of sending an army division to Asia before releasing the army in the Crimea. Our object, if peace is not concluded, is to strike a decisive blow at the enemy in the early days of the Spring, and if it is to be decisive, we cannot afford to neglect a single element of success. Now, although the generals maintain that in the Spring our effective forces will number 256,000 men, it would be imprudent to count on more than 200,000. This number is exactly what is required for the double operation in the Crimea. But even if this number were greatly increased, prudence would prohibit the detachment of 60,000 first-class troops from the main army whilst a capital operation is in progress. There is no question of abandoning an Asiatic campaign but simply of executing it, under improved conditions, a fortnight or a month later. Either our great expedition via Eupatoria and Mackensie succeeds, and the Russian army is destroyed, the Crimea conquered, the greater part of the allied army released and in a position to spare 60,000 or 80,000 men, whilst you in Asia are preceded by reports of victory, and in that case everything is accomplished. Or, on the contrary, our Eupatorian expedition fails, and then we shall lack the reinforcements which we need and have grave cause to regret their absence.

In my opinion it would be the height of imprudence to attempt two major operations at the same moment ; taken in succession, they offer a greater chance of success. Above all in the latter case the expedition would not be protracted, since it is a case not of a siege but of strategic movements. It is only a question, I repeat, of a fortnight's or a month's delay. During this time the Turkish army will suffice to hinder the advance of the Russians and, I maintain, the more the latter can be drawn in this direction, the more it will devolve on the English army to follow them up and march on Tiflis.

In war it is wiser to allow for the chance of defeat or at least to foresee possible difficulties, especially when an army

is operating far from its native country. Now, let us suppose that in the spring, when the mountains are still covered with snow, we have 150,000 combatants in the Crimea and 50,000 in Georgia, and that sickness and the enemy's fire have greatly reduced that number in the course of a few weeks ; reinforcements would be needed at these two opposite points, and no one could be certain that they would arrive in time to prevent a reverse. There is a French proverb which applies in many instances : *It is foolish to burn the candle at both ends.*

I entreat you to submit to the English Government these considerations, to which I attach great importance and to say that, saving this one point, I agree to all the rest. In accordance with the ideas exchanged here in council, I would suggest to the English Government to send Marshal Péliſſier to Eupatoria as soon as the preparations are complete. He would assume the command of the whole expeditionary force, whilst Sir L. Codrington would command the entire army which is before Sebastopol and which is operating on the front.

The war was now drawing to a close, and after a Conference at Paris in which the Emperor secured the confidence of both Lord Clarendon and the Russians, a peace was signed on 20th March, in a week from the birth of the Prince Imperial. The war had been almost in vain. Turkey, it was true, was saved : but that gave the Emperor no great satisfaction. His politics now turned in an entirely new direction.

IV

ITALY AND THE VATICAN

WHEN the Emperor found that the Crimean War had failed to liberate Poland, he combined with Cavour to liberate Lombardy. He was already suffering from his kidneys and after the Treaty of Paris took a cure at Plombières.

His liaison with Countess Castiglione enabled this lady to warn her cousin, Count Cavour, that his chance had come. This Minister came to Plombières with a false passport, to conspire with Napoleon III, who knew that, in order to attack Austria, he must combine with Russia also. In the autumn of 1858 he proposed to the Czar to dismember Austria ; also he admitted that war would break out in Italy in the month of May, 1859.

But Napoleon III remained undecided for two reasons : he knew that the Catholics would not allow him to abandon the Pope, or to encourage the King of Sardinia to violate the States of the Church ; he knew equally that England would not approve of the annexation of Savoy. But although he made infinite combinations, and as a result of this war became the friend of Franz Josef, so after the Crimean War he effected an entente with Russia. Further, to gain the sympathy of England he arranged a commercial treaty with that country.

From the very beginning the idea of liberating Italy had been high in the thoughts of Napoleon. As early as 3rd May, 1849, Baron Hübner wrote to

Prince Schwarzenberg that the President was already thinking of fighting Austria for Lombardy. That, Hübner had answered, was for revolutionaries like Raspail or Ledru-Rollin, but "You", he said to the President—

" You couldn't do it."

" But if I am dragged into it?"

" You will be ruined."

" Possibly."

" It's a certainty."

" Perhaps."

" You might begin the war, but unquestionably it is not you who will finish it. For Austria the war will end in peace—peace good or ill according to the decision of arms. For you, it is different. The victory of revolutionary France would cause the fall of Prince Louis, who represents the party of order."

" That is perfectly true," said the Prince, with a dreamy air and with an expression of conviction, " but in that case I must have help."

" We ask for nothing better," I replied. " But you must be ready to accept the help which everyone is willing to give you."

" I like this method of discussing matters," said the Prince when I was leaving. " It is the way to understand each other."

Baron Hübner to Prince Schwarzenberg

11th October, 1849.

" As you say," the President told me, " war would be disastrous to me. But if it was impossible to avoid it, I would accept it as a means, though I agree with you the means would be detestable." It is impossible to be more explicit and at the same time more truthful. The whole life of Louis Bonaparte is that of an adventurer : he will never hesitate to follow a course of political adventure.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

During Maximilian's visit, 17th May, 1856.

"My chief fear," said the Emperor to Hübner, "is that affairs with Italy should separate us. On all other questions, I see nothing that can disturb our friendly relations. My will, my intentions, and my interest are for a good understanding with Austria on Italian affairs, but you are well aware that men in the highest positions are not masters of circumstances ; they may be able to direct them to some extent, but in the end it is the current which carries them away. I fear that I myself may be carried away. I am the ally of England, and the King of Sardinia, by his co-operation in the war, has earned my sympathy and gratitude. That is why I was so anxious that Count Buol should have arrived at an understanding with M. de Cavour, and that you could have acted towards Sardinia as we have done towards Russia. We have made war—now let us embrace and let bygones be bygones."

"If you allowed the trend of circumstances to drag you into an Anglo-Piedmontese relationship," answered Hübner, "you would be abandoning yourself to revolution ; you would be a terror to mankind, and you would do Europe as much harm as you have done her good. You would injure no one so severely as yourself."

"That is perfectly true," replied the Emperor, "and it is for that reason that I desire an understanding with Austria. Also I am delighted to hear that Count de Coloredo is constantly visiting Rome. I wish to evacuate, and I have offered the Roman Government three thousand Swiss Catholics in the pay of England. Cardinal Antonelli has declined for the following reason : 'Our native force is unreliable, because it is discontented owing to its dislike of the Pope's Swiss guard. If we increase the number of Swiss, we should also increase the discontent of our native troops and make them even less dependable than they are now.' What do you say to this argument ? Is it not the logic of despair ? "

I replied that this was only an additional proof that, whilst it is difficult for the greatest rulers to govern their own

countries well, it is impossible for them to govern other countries even badly. . . . Afterwards I asked the Emperor the two following questions :—

“ Sire, are you planning to make territorial changes in Italy, either directly or indirectly ? ”

“ No,” was the answer. “ I have not the slightest idea of doing so.”

“ Would you encourage the establishment of constitutional and parliamentary government in Italy ? ”

“ Emphatically no,” His Majesty replied.

“ In that case,” I said, “ why should we not agree concerning Italy ? ”

“ That is just what I say,” answered the Emperor “ Our interests in Italy are identical, and we shall reach an understanding in the end.”

“ More especially,” I replied, “ if you are willing to respect the independence of foreign rulers.”

“ That is a matter of course.”

“ But what are the reforms that Your Majesty suggests ? ”

“ Ah ! ” said the Emperor, “ that is the difficulty. But I am thinking them out and we will discuss them later—before you return to Vienna after the christening I will give you every detail that the Emperor can desire.”

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

4th February, 1856.

“ Nothing,” said His Majesty, “ could be more ill-advised than to endeavour to apply to Italy that which Italy had ever repudiated, namely Unity of Government.” He was convinced that ages must pass before Italy would live quietly under one Sovereign. On the other hand, in no country had the theory of municipal government received greater development in bygone times, and it might be possible therefore to apply something of the kind in the Legations. If the Pope liked to have a legate to reside in each of them, let it be so, but let him have no temporal authority. His Majesty added that he threw out these hints without knowing how far they were practicable, but with the desire, as he said before, of doing for Sardinia as much as present circumstances permitted.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

7th February, 1856.

All Paris is *en émoi* at an escapade of the Emperor's who took it into his head to go to a ball at Madame Le Hou's on *mardi gras*. I cannot say how much I regret it for it has diminished that respect which I felt unfeignedly for him. He was by way of being incognito, but of course the secret was not kept, and as one might as well go to a bordel as to that house, and as His Majesty has never gone to any other, I leave you to guess all that is said.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

23rd May, 1856.

I told him of your wishes about Italy, and your idea that the best way to proceed would be to inform the Pope that the occupation would cease on a certain day. He agreed that this might possibly be a good step to take, but he said that he had other schemes in his head to which he did not like to allude from fear of being overheard, but he intended committing his ideas to writing, and would then communicate them to us.

(Cowley had already noticed that the Emperor was depressed and languid.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

10th June, 1856.

On the 20th, I believe, the Emperor goes to Plombières. I heard accidentally the other day that the Doctor from those waters, who knew His Majesty formerly, has been sent for and that he has expressed considerable anxiety at the state of the Emperor's inside.

In the meantime His Majesty is undergoing considerable fatigue, and says he is the better for it.

The Empress, I hear, has abandoned the idea of Biarritz, as they will not allow the Baby to go with her. There is a report that she is again with child. When the Emperor, however, was asked if this was so, he answered, "*Je ne crois pas.*"

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

11th June, 1856.

Lord Cowley continues to discuss the mutual advantage of an entente between Austria and England, not from any desire to separate us from France, but in order to hold the latter to the policy on which the Treaty of 1815 is based. "I do not doubt the complete loyalty of Louis Napoleon, nor his sincere desire to remain friends with England, but," said he, "it is characteristic of the Emperor that he likes to have two strings to his bow. Well, we prefer that Austria should be the second, not Russia."

** Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon*

24th June, 1856.

I must not, however, conceal from you that my footing is not what it was. Sometimes the Emperor treats me as of old, at others he will hardly condescend to speak to me; and I am not sure therefore that he will see me before his departure. The poor Empress is in very low spirits about him. She talked to me a long time about him—with tears in her eyes the whole time. She mentioned Fergusson's visit, and I said I trusted His Majesty followed the advice he had given, to which she replied that he did so most scrupulously. But she is evidently very very anxious about him, and I can see the Ministers are so likewise. After Plombières he is to go to Biarritz, after which the Empress hopes to get him to go to Compiègne and Fontainebleau, and to keep him as long as possible from Paris. She said that people mistook him—that he had such a calm exterior, they thought he had no feeling—whereas it was impossible to exaggerate the misery which the war had caused him, to which she attributed much of his illness.

** Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon¹*

1st July, 1856.

The Emperor is off to Plombières. I am told that care has been taken for His Majesty's *menus plaisirs* and that a lady is already installed there. In the meantime all Paris is scandalized by His Majesty's late proceedings with the

¹ These two letters are reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

Castiglione. Even the Court entourage talk of a *fête-champêtre* the other day at Villeneuve l'Etang where a few select were alone invited and where His Majesty rowed the said lady in a small boat alone and then disappeared with her in certain dark walks during the whole of the evening. The poor Empress was, I am told, in a sad state—got excited and began to dance, when not being sufficiently strong she fell very heavily. It was a regular orgy, the men dancing with their hats on. All this is very sad. It does the Emperor an infinity of harm politically speaking and certainly can be of no benefit to him either morally or physically.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

10th August, 1856.

The Emperor reached Paris yesterday evening. I am told that he looks very well and walks stronger and better than he did. As a proof of his strength, when it was found upon his arrival in Paris that the door of his carriage had got jammed and could not be opened, His Majesty jumped out of the window *à la Harlequin* to the extreme surprise and admiration of the bystanders.

I am afraid that he has been what is called *going it* at Plombières. I have heard some very comical stories, and I am afraid that the poor Empress, if she knew all, would have sad cause for complaint, or if she does know, she behaves admirably, for she keeps her counsel to herself. I suspect, however, that much of the irritation, which I am told she shows at her Sposo's manner of dealing with Spain, proceeds from other than political causes.

(Gossip, to be traced to an English doctor called Fergusson, said that the Emperor had disease of the spine and even that he was mad.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

13th October, 1856.

(Of the Emperor.)

He said with every appearance of sincerity that the last thing he should desire would be to see Murat on the throne of Naples, first because it would never be believed that he had not intrigued to place him there.

"Even you," he said (meaning England), "would never be convinced of the contrary."

Secondly because he must admit that Murat, *quoi qu'un bon garçon*, had not the qualities necessary to govern.

"But," continued His Majesty, "there is a wide difference between not aiding to accomplish a fact, and not acknowledging that fact if effected by others. To speak frankly, I could not engage to refuse to recognize Murat, if the popular will placed him on the throne of Naples. Nay, I will not say that I should not be pleased with the influence which it would give to France or that I do not think that Murat would make a better king than the present one, but with the same sincerity, I assure you that it is the last thing I desire, and that I will never move a finger to bring it about."

I then asked His Majesty about Italy in general, reminding him that some months ago he had told me that he had had some general plan in view, which when matured he had promised to communicate to Her Majesty's Government. He replied that he had begun some time ago to put it on paper, that he had not had leisure to finish it, but that it still occupied his thoughts. It consisted in forming a federation of Italian States.

His idea was that a Diet consisting of two Chambers should be established at Rome—the upper chamber to consist of representatives named by the Sovereign, the lower of deputies elected by the people. The subjects they would be permitted to discuss would be much the same as those submitted to the German Diet. Without going into detail, His Majesty thought that great amelioration in Government would result from some plan of this kind. I asked His Majesty whether he thought that the ecclesiastical nature of the Pope's Government would admit of the application of such a system. The Emperor answered that from the enquiries which he had had made, he anticipated less opposition to the Plan from the Pope than from any other Sovereign, which was the more extraordinary as it was certainly the Pope's temporal authority which would in reality be the most diminished by it, but this, he added, was one of the main objects of his plan.

He had lately had a long conversation with Serrano, the new Ambassador. Serrano told him that there were two Sovereigns of whom the Queen of Spain was afraid—the Emperor and the Pope. Fear of the Emperor induced her to think that she could but please and conciliate him by imitating in Spain the *coup d'état* which had succeeded in France, that this was constantly in her mind, and some day or other she might try to put her thoughts into execution.

This Serrano said would be sudden destruction to her. The Emperor after his interview with Serrano wrote to the Queen a letter in which he implored her for her own sake as well as for the sake of Spain not to attempt to govern on reactionary principles, but to recollect that Spain was accustomed to constitutional government. He could not, His Majesty said, give a greater proof that he had no desire to apply to other countries that which he had found necessary for France.

Before the conversation finished the Emperor had a rap at our Press. He spoke, however, so to say more in sorrow than in anger. He said that the worst of these constant attacks was that they were like flies which sting a horse till they made him run away, that they were a source of constant irritation which produced viscously feelings of aversion and bitterness. He went on to deplore the fact that the words of such ruffians as Louis Blanc were believed rather than those of his Government. He admitted that after many years of revolution in France, and with the divided state of public opinion in this country, many things existed which he should desire to see otherwise. No doubt there was a secret police ; and here and there unconstitutional acts were committed, but time alone could remedy such abuses—time and a settled government. I cannot say what an impression his words and manners in saying them made upon me. He alluded among other things to the attempts which had been made upon his own life, to the difficulties of all sorts with which he had to contend, and one could see at once that he was sincere that no man would rejoice more than himself if all that was harsh and severe could be done away with.

Baron Hübler to Count Buol-Schauenstein

Compiègne, 22nd October, 1856.

After our conversation had assumed this intimate tone, I said to him : " Does Your Majesty know what were the Emperor's last words when he took leave of me at Ischl ? ' Tell the Emperor Napoleon,' said His Majesty, ' that I am anxious to establish friendly relations with him, provided he consolidates the dynasty which he has founded and pursues a policy that is genuinely dynastic. That will be a guarantee of order for Europe, and I desire it sincerely '."

My companion was visibly pleased and touched.

" Your Majesty," I continued, " is in the prime of life and in good health. May God preserve you to France and Europe. But God may will it otherwise, and I see a cradle beside your throne. What European alliance could be more to the advantage of this imperial infant than that which my august Master offers, on the sole condition that you rule as a dynastic Sovereign and not as an individual. Could any other alliance be more favourable ? "

" I realize it," said the Emperor. " I realize it fully," he replied with an air of conviction.

Baron Hübler to Count Buol-Schauenstein

Compiègne, 27th October, 1856.

His Majesty told me that he deeply regrets the complications with Russia ; that he has made representations to St. Petersburg through M. de Morny, but that they promise no result ; that Russia is bitterly incensed because England has sent ships to the Black Sea and that his Ambassador has had the greatest difficulty in preventing the Emperor Alexander from protesting publicly against this violation of the treaty of peace. Here the Emperor explained his views concerning his relations with England, his wish and firm resolve to maintain the alliance with Great Britain which, like that with Austria, he regards as the pivot of his policy ; but he did not conceal that England is sometimes difficult to handle, and he regretted, he said, that, by sending English

warships into the Black Sea, Lord Palmerston had given Russia the excuse of refusing any concession which public opinion might attribute to a fear of reprisals.

"I am racking my brains," said His Majesty, "and I can't find a way out."

I must again point out that in this lengthy conversation the Emperor was entirely friendly to Austria . . . His Majesty returned to the question of Neufchatel. "I do not dispute," he said, "the rights of the King of Prussia, but really I cannot allow anyone to make war against Switzerland. There are geographical reasons, so to speak, that I cannot overlook. The treaties of 1815 made a wide breach in the French frontier which is undefended from Metz to Mannheim. What are my other frontiers? In addition to the sea, there are Switzerland, Piedmont, and Spain (His Majesty did not name Belgium). Consequently it is my interest to treat these countries well in time of peace, so that I can rely upon them in time of war. That is why I protect Switzerland, and why I am surety for Piedmont as long as she behaves herself towards the rest of the world."

"You are perfectly right, Sire," I replied, "and as regards Switzerland and Piedmont, what applies to France applies equally to Austria."

The Emperor appeared much struck by this remark.

"You are right," he cried, "absolutely right."

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

29th October, 1856.

In one of his despatches he (Persigny) mentioned that you had told him the Emperor was following the policy of Louis Philippe, and this has made His Majesty a little short of wild. The Empress spoke to me about it, saying that the Emperor had not expected such a blow from you. I tried to laugh the whole matter off and said that Persigny had mistaken an illustration for an assertion, that what you had intended to do was to warn the Emperor against the possible consequences of too great intimacy with Russia.

Lord Cowley to Sir H. Bulwer

1st November, 1856.

The more I see of this extraordinary man who is to keep this machine going, the more I respect and admire him. There is such an evident intention to do well, and there is in foreign matters at least so much frankness in his character with those with whom he *knows* he can be frank, that there is a great charm in doing business with him, even when we do not agree. If he had but men about him with the same honest intentions as himself, what a country they might become. Perhaps it is better for us that it is not so.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

1st November.

I told the Empress yesterday all you said with regard to the expressions attributed to you in comparing the Emperor to Louis Philippe, and she seemed thoroughly to understand your feelings for the Emperor. You must always recollect that when she spoke to me, it was far more in sorrow than in anger, and moreover in anxiety lest the Emperor should have suffered in your good opinion.

The Empress's accounts from Spain are bad, that is, that she is afraid the Queen will get rid of Narvaez as she got rid of O'Donnell in order to make herself still more absolute. The Emperor has received answer to his letter of advice which the Empress tells me conveys in civil terms—"Mind your own business, and leave me to manage mine."

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

3rd November, 1856.

(Cowley argued that Walewsky was rather for Russia than for England and that his procedure was profoundly irritating.) The Emperor answered that, without going as far as I did, there was much to blame in Walewsky. "*Je vous parle comme à mon ami,*" he continued. "Walewsky is no statesman, there are none in France. I tell him to do something, and he does it in a disobliging or an extravagant manner. He has no moderation, no tact. But I cannot think him such a friend to Russia as you do, or that he is hostile to the English alliance."

Baron Hübler to Count Buol-Schauenstein

Private.

16th November, 1856.

It is true that the Emperor has been coqueting with Russia. He would have liked to establish himself in special favour at St. Petersburg : the role of privileged counsellor to Turin, Madrid, Berlin, and Constantinople attracted him greatly, but I repeat, I do not think that he has been planning new political combinations. By visiting Plombières and Biarritz, he reckoned on improving his health, and amusing himself, whilst he left Count Walewski in charge of foreign affairs. (This surely is where Hübler was deceived.)

Baron Hübler to Count Buol-Schauenstein

7th December, 1856.

I found the Emperor under the impression, as you know, that the Moldo-Wallachians were unanimous in demanding union, but unwilling, he said, to interfere with Austria's rights to settle her own affairs ; but he does not admit the inconvenience and danger to the peace of our provinces on the Danube which might result from the creation of a Roumanian state in our rear. Finally he declared that he had committed himself too far to go back on his word. According to His Majesty, the safe way to make the Moldo-Wallachians harmless is to content them by reunion, etc.

Naturally I opposed these theories, but without making any headway . . . I also spoke very frankly about the behaviour of his agents in the principalities. . . .

" You talk," said the Emperor, " of the influence and ascendancy of France in the principalities. Tell me where this influence and ascendancy are. *I do not know.*"

Baron Hübler to Count Buol-Schauenstein

22nd December, 1856.

Russia has obtained the support of France by holding revelry with feet still red with the blood of the defenders of Malakoff. " Here I am," she said, " save me." Prussia has followed her example with similar success. " I can never think of you," she wrote to France—I am quoting literally—" except with tears in my eyes."

Napoleon III to Lord Cowley

The Tuilleries, 24th December, 1856.

Thank you for the good news which you send me to-day. Believe me, no one is happier than myself at the restoration of complete confidence between the English Government and mine. As you have been no stranger to this welcome solution, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and constant friendship.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

28th December, 1856.

I heard a curious story of Morny the other day coming from a Frenchman who was at Moscow, and if not a friend of Morny's, at all events a friend of the Emperor's. He describes the French Embassy¹ as a complete failure and he says that he knows the Czar contrasted it with Granville's in the most unfavourable terms. Morny's life had greatly disgusted the Imperial family. He had given a ball to certain *ladies* which had been looked upon as an outrage. Louis Napoleon, he says, is hated in Russia as much now as in the last Emperor's time, and the Russians avow openly that they are playing a game cajoling the French in order to separate them from us, but that it is with the intention of renewing the Holy Alliance afterwards, and leaving Louis Napoleon to his fate.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

15th February, 1857.

You will read His Majesty's Speech on opening the Chambers with interest. It is a strange mixture of philosophical truths and political lies, admirably served up. I doubt the good taste of the quotation from Thiers at the end.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

20th March, 1857.

The conversation naturally flowed on Italian affairs. Walewsky said that Cavour was playing a deep, and he thought a dangerous game—that Cavour's object was a European war

¹ i.e. to Russia.

for Italian purposes and it was impossible to say that he might not succeed. Unfortunately Austria was by his foolish conduct playing into Cavour's hands. The Emperor Joseph had quite destroyed the position which he had acquired for himself, by his late conduct in Italy, and had raised Sardinia in proportion in the balance.

Baron Hübler to Count Buol-Schauenstein

13th May, 1857.

Well, what does France really want? All those I have consulted, myself included, believe that all parties, the reds excepted, desire peace, and nothing but peace, seasoned with a little glory. This is exactly the line that Louis Napoleon is taking. How often in 1849 or 1850, when he was practically a prisoner of state at the Elysée, he said to me: "Louis Philippe fell because he let France fall into disrepute. I must do something." This was the motive which took him to the Crimea, and which made him leave it again as soon as he had *done* something."

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

19th June, 1857.

His Majesty declined, but it certainly was in the general interests, and not for *les beaux yeux* of Austria, that we made the proposition. This little anecdote will show you what is rankling in the Imperial mind.

The Emperor then turned to another and to a very serious matter on which he said that he wished I would write to you. It had been proved to demonstration that Ledru-Rollin and Mazzini were actively employed in suborning persons to assassinate him. These persons had been arrested lately with letters in their possession from which no other conclusion could be drawn. He had been urged to consent to the trial of these persons, but he had refused for the present, on the eve of the Elections, as it might be considered a plan got up to damage the Republican party at the moment. He should, however, be much inclined to bring these individuals to trial later, if he felt certain that their conviction would enable Her Majesty's Government to withdraw the protection

of Great Britain from men who did not scruple to plan his assassination. I said that I was not very conversant with our laws regarding foreigners, but that I could not bring myself to believe that if such a plan could be brought home to any refugee, he could be tried and punished, but I could not help adding that there was such a difference in the form of trial in the two countries, that what carried conviction here might not be the same in England. However what His Majesty wants to know is this. If it can be proved according to French law that Ledru-Rollin and Mazzini are engaged in plots against His Majesty's life, can you, and will you, expel them from England? Mazzini, His Majesty told me, had been nearly successful in raising a revolt in Genoa last Wednesday, and would probably have been successful had not a ship laden with arms been lost.

Where on earth does Mazzini get his money? The Emperor does not scruple to say, in England. He thinks that money can be obtained for any wild scheme among Her Majesty's liege subjects. . . .

With respect to the Government candidates, he said that he felt deeply but it was impossible to find men known to France and of high calibre to become candidates. He then talked of the partition of land as a curse to France, though it had originally been a blessing in bringing a great deal more land into cultivation. . . .

I had some little talk about Cuba and Mexico, and I think that at bottom the Emperor shares your opinion that after all the annexation of Mexico to the United States is natural, and will not give them much greater strength.

The Emperor now said that as people who loved each other were apt to be jealous, he could not conceal his anxieties about our relations with Austria. What did it mean?

At the end of the war England was anything but well disposed towards the Austrian Government. France on the contrary had endeavoured to bring us (England and Austria) more together. But from the moment of Buol's arrival in Paris, Austria was right in everything she did, and the closest intimacy was established between the Cabinets of London and Vienna, and people could not but think that

this was directed against France. I said that His Majesty had given so flattering a reason for the jealousy which he had expressed, namely affection for the English alliance, that I ought not to quarrel with it. But seriously speaking, if I turned the tables and asked His Majesty what had become of the Austrian Alliance with France and how came it that Russia was now everything, what answer would he give ? It was, however, a mistake, I said, to suppose that our relations with Austria were more intimate than necessarily grew out of an identical feeling of the two Governments upon certain questions. England and Austria agreed together on most of the questions arising out of the Treaty of Paris. France differed from them and shared the opinions of Russia. Hence we were naturally obliged to hold the same language as Austria ; but whose fault was that ? However, this did not prevent us, I said, from blaming the conduct of Austria ; when blame was justly due, we had not concealed our opinion from the Austrian Cabinet, especially the late transactions with Sardinia. "I beg your pardon," rejoined the Emperor, "even there you sided with Austria, and you warned us to join you in remonstrating with the Sardinian Government in order to give a triumph to Austria." This only shows, I replied, how foregone conclusions may warp the best judgments. Her Majesty's Government entertained the idea which was fully participated by His Majesty's Government—if faithfully represented by Walewsky—that the rupture between Austria and Sardinia was fraught with danger for the tranquility of Italy. We thought of, I might almost say we knew that Austria's chief cause of alarm was the language used by Cavour respecting the territorial arrangements of Italy, and that if he could be induced to give satisfactory assurances on this head, diplomatic relations might be resumed between the two Courts, and we proposed to His Majesty to join us in obtaining these assurances.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

29th June, 1857.

The Pope had made a *tournée* as far as Bologna, and one neutral observer had written to another in Paris :—

"The Austrians are perfect. They efface themselves completely. They exalt the Holy Father and his authority, always and everywhere. Consequently they are much beloved. Everyone admits it, everyone says it, but under the seal of secrecy."

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

2nd August, 1857.

Persigny's accounts of the Emperor's continued friendly feelings for England I do not care a rush for. I have too many proofs that the Emperor's real feeling is that the alliance is a necessity for him, and nothing else. The fact is that his idea of an alliance is quite different from ours. Alliance with him means doing exactly what he pleases. He knows, however, on which side his bread is buttered and that a rupture with us would shake his own throne, and that it is his interest to keep well with us. And perhaps this is a safer state of things than too great affection.

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon*

Paris, 4th August, 1857.

There has nearly been the devil to pay—but this is for yourself alone, and I beg you to say nothing about it to anyone else.

It appears that in a conversation which Persigny had with Palmerston, the latter let fall the words "*pourquoi donc vient-il à Osborne ?*" This Persigny very imprudently reported in a public despatch which Walweski, as imprudently, showed to the Emperor. You may imagine the irate state of the Imperial mind. He at first determined to telegraph to the Queen that in the circumstances he would not come; however, he thought better of it afterwards though he remained much put out. I said to Walweski, who told me this in the greatest secrecy, that the words could only have escaped Palmerston in a moment of irritation, and when it was recollected what burdens he had on his mind, the House of Commons, loss of sleep, etc., it was hard to attach importance to expressions which really meant nothing more than annoyance at the struggle going on between the two

Governments. I knew Palmerston's sentiments well, I said, and I only wished for His Majesty's sake that he had as many real and true friends . . . at all events it was an unlucky slip of the tongue at this moment, though I am not sorry that the Emperor should see that we are justly offended at the line which he is taking.

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon*¹

Confidential.

4th August, 1857.

I could write volumes so strongly do I feel about it. His vagaries must be met with firmness, or he will think that he can dictate to everyone. I should let him understand that we are as much alive as ever to the value of the alliance, but that an alliance where one acts without consultation with or any regard for the wishes and opinions of the other, is of no value and must finally end in estrangement. I am sure you will excuse me for writing thus freely, but I have watched men and events narrowly here lately, and I can see well that the Emperor has been completely spoilt by the adulation that he has met with from the continental potentates, and it galls him to see that we do not equally obey his behests, and he ought to be taught that ours is an alliance for the mutual good of the two countries and of Europe in general, but that it is not our intention to adopt every strange doctrine that proceeds from the Imperial mouth.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

18th September, 1857.

(Napoleon III was to go to Stuttgart to see the Czar, and the Prince of Prussia was afraid—*Que la France et la Russie se soient données la main au-dessus-de la tête de la Prusse.*)

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon*¹

16th October, 1857.

I did not gather a great deal from my shooting visit on Friday. In the first place shooting is not favourable to conversation, and secondly the Emperor was so unwell

¹ These letters are reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

that he could hardly drag one leg after the other, and was obliged to give in after two hours, during which, however, we managed to bag 1,167 head ! Seven guns ! I was with him in his carriage, but as the Duc d'Albe was with us the conversation was very general. I gave him the Queen's message with which he was much pleased and said that he wished Her Majesty would profit by his offer. He then talked a little about his visit to Germany and the manner in which he had been received. . . . He discussed the people he had met individually, particularly the female part, saying that the Empress of Russia was odious, though intent upon being civil, that the Queen of Greece, whom he had expected to find *spirituelle* and *intriguante*, was as coarse as an old fish-woman, that the Queen of Holland was *charmante*, the Princess Olga *très distinguée*. The Grand Duchess of Baden seems to have made the most favourable impression. Of the men His Majesty said that the Emperor of Russia was *très bien et très poli*. Gortchakoff, of whom however he saw little, a great talker.

With regard to politics I was determined to say nothing unless the Emperor began. He did so and talked for about half an hour after luncheon with his usual frankness and cordiality. . . . He said that Stuttgart had confirmed his opinion that the union of the Principalities would be the greatest blow that could be given to Russia in that quarter. That country, he said, had played a very bold political game, she had flattered France on this question solely with the purpose of separating her from England, but in fact she had never intended that the union should take place. This he had ascertained beyond all doubt. On the other hand the policy of England had been far less adroit ; simply to please Austria she had taken her stand against the union and thus risked her good relations with France. This was a little too bad and I took the liberty in as courteous language as I could command, to give the Emperor a piece of my mind. I said that I was really surprised to hear him holding such language—that he ought to have known us better. What advantage, I asked, could accrue to England from pandering in any way to Austria, while His Majesty must know the value we set on our Alliance with France. . . .

The Emperor also told me that he had spoken with the utmost frankness to the Emperor of Russia, that he had told him that the late war had opened his eyes with respect to Turkey, that there did not exist another country so ill-governed, and that it could have no durability. He thought its dissolution should be provided for by all prudent and far-seeing Governments. There were three great powers in Europe, England, France, and Russia . . . why then should not these three Governments endeavour to come to some understanding beforehand on all political questions that might arise, Turkey, the Mediterranean, etc. The Tsar had replied that he did not mean to burn his fingers by anticipating events. . . .

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon*

19th October, 1857.

Kissileff¹ came to dine with me here yesterday, and I put him upon the Stuttgart meeting. He confirmed all that the Emperor had told me about the little that was done there. The Emperor had talked in vague terms to the Czar of the value of an Alliance between Russia, France, and England, and the Czar had replied "*qu'il ne demandait pas mieux*", but asked what was the object for that all alliances must have one, and that he could say nothing till he saw more of the Emperor's views. The subject dropped, but was renewed the following day by the Emperor but with no better result. Kissileff made a curious remark to me. He said that the more he saw of the Emperor, the more he was struck with the extraordinary similitude of his ideas to those of the Emperor Nicholas—I have no doubt that this is the case—that the Emperor (ours) is quite as good an autocrat at heart, and that he has just the same ideas about the impossibility of Turkey continuing to exist as had the late Czar . . .

I may as well mention that Kissileff is not without apprehension of what may be Louis Napoleon's intentions with respect to Italy, and it is evident that something passed at Stuttgart which has alarmed the Russians. When I

¹ Russian Ambassador in Paris. Reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

attempted to induce Kissileff to tell me what it was he feared, he said that he had reason to know that the Emperor had been in communication with, and had made promises to the Republican Party by which he was fettered.

My belief is that this may have been the case in the Emperor's youthful days when he was a mere adventurer at everything in the ring, but his whole conduct proves now that he is more likely in Italy to err on the side of upholding arbitrary power than on that of too great liberalism.

By the way, he told the Emperor of Russia that, although he would do nothing to favour Murat, he would not oppose him, should anything place that worthy on the throne of Naples.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

Compiègne, 9th November, 1857.

The constant whirl in which we live here renders it difficult to find a quiet moment to write to you. Night and day, something or other is going on. How the Emperor finds time to attend at all to business, I cannot divine. Luckily there is no very serious question to attend to, for spite of the awkward way they set to work, I am convinced that they mean honestly by us in the Principalities Question. Before I dip into politics, however, I must say a word about the Emperor himself. I think him very much altered ; he is out of spirits and by what I can gather from those who see more of him than I do, I mean his household, he must be very much out of health. He has had a constant cold upon him, since we have been here, how caught you would never guess, but if your youthful reminiscences will take you back to a game called "Hare and Hounds" you will picture to yourself His Imperial Majesty, his pockets filled with little bits of paper, enacting the hare, while the rest of the society of all ages follow the Imperial scent. The amusement, however, ended in His Majesty catching a violent cold, from which he is still suffering ; I think him, moreover, much aged in looks, his back *courbé*.

I have had little political conversation with him. Walewsky watches him like a cat, and I fancy that the Emperor is really afraid of him.



Some remarkable sketches of the Emperor by Carpeaux. The original at
Malmaison

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

Compiègne, 16th November, 1857.

The Empress, instead of letting people alone, torments herself and them by thinking it necessary to furnish constant amusement for them; such amusement generally suiting some people and not others; but they are both so natural and unaffected, and there is so little ceremony and etiquette, that the life is not disagreeable for a short time. Breakfast is at half-past eleven, then there is either hunting or shooting or some expedition to go to. Horses and carriages are found for everybody who wants them and nothing can be prettier than one of their cavalcades. Dinner about eight o'clock which never lasts more than an hour. In the evening there is dancing to a *hand organ* (a dreadful trial to one's auricular nerves) or charades or cards. Now and then the Company of one of the Theatres from Paris is brought down to act.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

18th November, 1857.

The Emperor does not appear to be under the least alarm concerning the financial state of France. His Majesty is much pleased at the encomium passed on the letter which he published in the *Moniteur*.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

14th January, 1858.

I dined yesterday evening at the Tuileries. The dinner was given for the Duke of Saxe Coburg. In the course of the evening, I had one of those *walking* conversations with the Emperor in which he seems to unburden himself as he would to a confessor. The matter, moreover, turned more upon French internal interests than upon foreign questions. He is at loggerheads with the Minister of Finance and his Minister of War because he will not reduce the army. He is resolved to keep it at the nominal effective of 400,000 men. On the whole, it is difficult to blame him, for it certainly would not be wise in him to be caught napping. He let out, however, what a bother Algeria was to France, 90,000

men tied by the leg—and no return—and this, he observed, while India has been held by 30,000 Europeans with immense advantage to England. . . .

His Majesty is also uneasy at the scarcity of silver which he says is beginning to be severely felt in France. I asked him whether he had never thought of taking gold for the monetary standard of the Empire. He replied that the difficulties were so immense as to render such a conversion all but impossible. . . .

I am sorry to add that he began a new story of suspicion against us. How he had heard from so many quarters that we were stirring up Austria and Prussia against France, that it was difficult to disbelieve in, etc. I stopped him dead short and said, "Sir, I have given you my word of honour before that this is not true, I give it to you now once more. There is no truth whatever in these more than ridiculous assertions." . . . These stories . . . emanated in reality from St. Petersburg.

(On 14th January Orsini attempted to assassinate the Emperor.)

15th January, 1858.

(The Empress' eye was inflamed ; a piece of glass from the bomb having touched her eye.

There was great indignation in Paris, and much of it naturally centred on England's sympathy with Mazzini and other Italian conspirators.)

17th January, 1858.

(Morny referred to England as a "*laboratoire de crime*", and Cowley therefore refused to invite him to the Embassy Ball.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

17th January, 1858.

There can be no doubt after what occurred on Wednesday that the police are powerless to prevent such attempts, and the Emperor being both imprudent and a fatalist will expose himself. It was a miracle that he had an escort with him on Wednesday, for he had given up the practice, but as he

happened to be out shooting at Fontainebleau in the morning, the *Ecuyer de Service* had taken upon himself to order the escort to come. Had the Emperor been at home he would certainly have prevented it.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

22nd January, 1858.

I thought the Emperor very low. The other day a fair lady who is supposed to stand at the moment high in his good graces asked him if he was ill as he looked so miserable. "Non," was the reply, "*mais je suis profondément triste et découragé.*"

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

29th January, 1858.

The Emperor is very much annoyed at the articles in *The Times* and he means to allude to them in the *Moniteur*. He assured me, however, that this should be done in a very mild and conciliatory tone, his object being to correct a mistake into which he supposes the English Public to have fallen, namely, that he wishes that all refugees should be sent away. Now there could be no greater mistake. Nobody respected more than himself the right of protecting political refugees. In France there were Poles and Italians of all sorts, and he would never listen to any demand to send them away, but there was a great difference between harbouring refugees and criminals, and he must say that when there was a *moral* conviction, and unfortunately there could be no other, that foreigners were conspiring in England to assassinate, those foreigners ought to be sent away.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

3rd February, 1858.

There is a general belief prevalent that Walewsky is falling. Madame's star is said to be on the decline. They both look miserable.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

10th February, 1858.

The Emperor is one of the most susceptible of men.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

14th February, 1858.

The poor Empress is tormented to death by anonymous letters telling her that the little Prince is to be carried off, and the poor child is now never let out of sight of the house.

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

3rd March, 1858.

Fancy the Emperor telling me yesterday that he could not help feeling the greatest sympathy for Orsini. I should not be in the least surprised if he pardoned him, or at least mitigated his punishment. The Empress is upon her knees to him to do so. If he does, it will have a very bad impression. His Majesty has evidently been tickled (I can use no other expression) by Orsini's letter read at the trial, in which it is said that the fate of Italy is in His Majesty's hands. There was never a man more easily caught by flattery of this kind.

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury¹

4th March, 1858.

The Emperor last night said there was a question which he wished to put to me—not as British Ambassador, but as a friend. Did I think it possible for him to commute the sentence of death on Orsini? His Majesty added that he could not help feeling the greatest sympathy for him and that it would be a great happiness to him if Orsini were not executed . . . He is regularly bitten by this miscreant.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

20th March, 1858.

M. de Persigny is not, as is generally believed, in favour of an English alliance; he is in favour of a Palmerstonian alliance. He acknowledges only one statesman: Lord Palmerston. Napoleon I at the beginning of the century, Lord Palmerston at the end! These are the two men, not only in Europe, but in the whole world; the two fetishes, to use his own expression, beyond whom there is nothing and nobody.

¹ *The Paris Embassy.*

Vienna Archives.

Baron Hübler to Count Buol-Schauenstein

20th March, 1858.

The newspapers are largely responsible for the moral prostration which exists to-day. The French newspapers contribute by their silence ; the foreign newspapers by the prominence they give to exaggerated fears and to false or malevolent rumours. For, by founding his throne on the ruins of the parliamentary tribunal, the Emperor Napoleon dealt in France—and the repercussion was felt more or less throughout Europe—a mortal blow to the liberty of the Press. Consequently this became his implacable foe. With regard to France, Louis Napoleon is in the position of a victorious general in the country of an enemy which is mistress of the territory which he is occupying. He is supported only by the papers which he subsidizes. All the others detest him, attack him, play him dirty tricks, and he is cut to the heart. . . .

M. de Pietri, the Prefect of Police, has just handed in his resignation ; disputes with the new Minister of the Interior enter largely into his decision, but I am assured that the actual reason is as follows : Since the arrest of the conspirators, M. de Pietri, who is devoted to the Emperor, a Corsican by birth, an Italian by conviction and sympathy, has pleaded ardently and passionately with his master on behalf of Orsini. As Your Excellency knows, it was he who conveyed Orsini's letter to the Emperor ; it was he who maintained before the Privy Council that the Emperor should have mercy on Orsini, chiefly because he was a martyr, devoted—to the point of crime, it must be admitted—to a sacred cause, the cause of Italian independence.

Baron Hübler to Count Buol-Schauenstein

19th March, 1859.

On 5th March, 1859, the *Moniteur* admitted that there was a defensive alliance with Piedmont, but denied that there were any preparations for war : the public were delighted. “*Mais nous n’aimons pas la guerre,*” they said, “*et cela nous suffit.*”

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

22nd March.

The Emperor is warming up for Italy again. Orsini's letter and the dread of Italian stilettos would some day drag him into action if he knew how to begin.

Nevertheless, when the Italian conspirator Bernard was acquitted by a London jury the French were furious. None more so than the Empress.

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

9th April, 1858.

I dined yesterday at the Tuileries. His Majesty was somewhat out of sorts, and as there was a large party I had not a great deal of conversation with him. He asked me about China and our intentions, expressing great anxiety that we should obtain a good commercial opening. I had read in the morning Robertson's memorandum on our trade, and I told the Emperor that unless our merchants could get into the interior to buy and sell on their own account I did not expect much increase of business with the Chinese. His Majesty is also of this opinion and thinks that we shall obtain nothing unless we get to Pakin, *coûte que coûte*. For this purpose he considers that a land expedition, or rather an expedition that can be landed, should be sent, and he proposes that we should furnish 10,000 men and he 5,000.

* *The Empress to Lord Cowley*

18th April, 1858.

When I received yesterday the telegram announcing the acquittal of Bernard, my first inclination was to write to you, but a sentiment, an exaggerated one perhaps, restrained me. Your position and my own are too delicate to allow us to act on impulse ; but on further reflection this is not interference in matters which do not concern me : it is the urge of my inmost feelings. At the present day moral sense is interpreted so strangely, good and evil are so often confused, that I ask myself which is deceiving me ? Speaking purely as a woman (for I hold myself aloof from all politics) no one

knows better than yourself the depth of my sympathies with England. I admire your cold reason, the proverbial common sense which saves you from affectation, which weighs dispassionately, which enables you to judge justly. But there is one thing to fear more than the tyranny of the individual, it is the tyranny of *the masses*. I will tell you what it is that revolts my feelings. It is not the absurd reports which I read daily in your newspapers ; it is not the knowledge that the Emperor is the butt of malevolent attacks, nor the fear of seeing my husband and son struck down in my arms by an assassin, who takes upon himself the part of judge and executioner in one. No, my confidence in God is too great ; but where all these have failed, the acquittal of Bernard has succeeded. It has reduced me to a state of utter dismay. I have seen two men before the same tribunal, the one an assassin (for in your heart of hearts you admit him to be so) arraigned by the public Ministry ; the other arraigned morally before the same jury by Bernard's defender. The first has been acquitted. What can I add, I, the wife of the second ? . . . Are the weak defended against the strong, are the liberties of the civilized world protected, when a jury (nominally impartial) is forced to yield such satisfaction to a crowd which gives frenzied applause to a verdict which authorizes the melancholy adage : *Killing is no murder* ? I know that your honest soul revolts against this deed.

Do not imagine that I wished the man to die. Because I abhor bloodshed, I pleaded for mercy for Orsini in the face of public opinion. My cause for regret is that you have failed to establish a great moral principle—as a wife and mother I see the whole peace of my life destroyed. Assassins are now strong in the support of England, and I confess with shame that I feel crushed, perhaps wrongly so, beneath such a verdict.

Since Bernard's acquittal assassins have your moral support ; they are free to plot against us : you have given them the right. No new law can alter it. Conscience has pronounced its ultimatum : the jury need not judge. Perhaps I am wrong to write to you in this way, but I am suffocating and I leave diplomatic language to others. I can only express

what I feel so keenly, and I am addressing not the English Ambassador, but a friend whom I esteem and who will forgive me if my letter is too candid.¹

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

3rd May, 1858.

(The Duchess Stephanie of Baden had come and was influencing the Emperor in favour of patience with England. He had great respect for her judgment.)

At a dinner-party given on 15th May, 1858, to the Queen of Holland and the Prince Royal of Wurtemburg, the Emperor led Baron Hübner aside for a long conversation about the principalities and Italy.

"I am not going to talk to you with diplomatic ambiguity," said His Majesty, "I will tell you my actual thought, and why I think it."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Hübner. "It is the way to reach an agreement; and if we cannot agree, at least we shall know where we stand. Only, Sire, give me permission to use the same frankness towards Your Majesty."

"That is understood. This is how I put it to myself. I made war in the East. Austria did not make war. If she had fired a single shot, I should consider it quite natural that she should exercise preponderating influence on those Eastern districts which touch her borders, and which are far removed from France. But as I have made greater sacrifices than Austria and all the other Powers combined, I consider that I should have in Turkey an influence proportionate to my sacrifices. Well, this is what displeases Austria. She thwarts me everywhere, in great things and in small, and this embitters our relations."

Hübner answered by citing the example of the Emperor Nicholas, who was defeated because he wanted to dominate Turkey. "Sire," he continued, "do not base your claim on territorial rivalries, or you will be alone in your opinion. No one denies the splendid part which you played so gloriously in the late war. No one disputes the fame that you have won, nor the important page which you have written in history. Gratitude and high esteem, Europe grants you these with her whole heart, but preponderance, no!"

¹ Reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

"I do not want preponderance," retorted the Emperor. "I only want my fair share of influence in Turkey. I did not make war for her, I made it against Russia ; but not for Turkey's sake. People say that the integrity of the Porte is a European necessity. That may be. It is a very sad necessity which leaves in these five countries people as foolish as they are weak. But what alarms me is to realize that my influence in Constantinople is nil, while you, who have done nothing for Turkey, are all powerful. I repeat it, all powerful."

A singular confession, and pregnant with teaching for him who made it ! I might have asked, "Whose fault is it ?" The reason why France had lost her influence over Turkey was that she was obviously seeking too much. All that Austria asked, said Hübner, was to maintain Turkey in her independence and integrity.

"At Stuttgart, the Emperor Alexander—I can say it definitely because it is the truth," said the Emperor, changing the subject, "the Emperor proposed that I should sign an act. I declined. I told him that alliance is useless unless it has a definite object. As there was none between the Emperor and myself, I signed nothing. I have entered into no engagement with Russia"

"With England," continued the Emperor, "I have an alliance. We have fought side by side, but our relations have suffered owing to her conduct. In small things she is always giving me pin-pricks. That compromises our friendly relations. It is the same with Austria."

"Pardon my frankness, Sire," I replied, "but I have often thought that you attach too great importance to trifles."

"No, no," cried my companion. I was wrong to call them trifles ; they were very important matters.

"Then, as far as concerns Austria, will you tell me what they are ? What are your complaints, Sire ?"

The Emperor named the affair of Belgrade, the questions of the Union, Montenegro, and the Danube. He added that Austria spoke everywhere against him, that this was reported to him on all sides, especially from Berlin and Constantinople ; finally that we were always and everywhere blocking his path.

"Sire," I answered, "every power has a moral basis,

a principle that we cannot abandon with impunity. Ask the Pope to surrender an article of faith, and he will refuse ; if he consented, he would cease to be Pope. Claim England's help to overthrow a parliamentary Government, and she will tell you that it is against her principles, and you yourself would answer the same if you were asked to fight elsewhere against universal suffrage which you have established in France. Austria's principle is respect for the inviolable rights of Sovereigns, and non-recognition of the claims of nationalities to establish themselves as political states. . . . Well, since the peace, the course of the French Government on several occasions has violated these principles on which our constitution is founded and on which we cannot negotiate."

" You mustn't say that," the Emperor interrupted. " Austria and England are the only two Powers which have no principles and, as a matter of fact, so much the better. The proof is your behaviour in Montenegro."

" Austria," answered Hübner, " must oppose any tendency in the principalities to constitute themselves separate states. And, permit me to add, Sire, it is not she who raised these questions ; it is Your Majesty. I do not agree that Austria is always blocking Your Majesty's path ; on the contrary, I would venture to say that it is France who blocks the path of Austria. And what is our path ? It is the preservation of public rights, the preservation of thrones and states, of territorial conscriptions, such as have been checked by treaties."

The Emperor made little reply to this argument. He limited himself to the remark that the creation of a Roman State would not have endangered the peace of the Austrian monarchy, that there were mountains between Transylvania and the Principalities, etc., but all this without insisting . . . " This Montenegrin question is a small matter, but it may lead us far. For instance, what was the origin of the last war ? It was a silly affair of old Saints and the follies of M. de la Valette . . . But I am no friend of revolutionary Italy," said the Emperor.

I said that as long as doubts hovered, of course erroneously, over French policy concerning Italy, it would be difficult for

Austria to march against other countries. For example, in recent Eastern affairs, however much she desired it, she was unable to side with France.

The Emperor repeated that he was certainly no friend of Italian revolutionaries, but that it was impossible for him to explain ; finally he had not changed his policy.

This ended the interview.

"I finish," I said, "where I should have begun, by the message to Your Majesty with which my august Master entrusted me. When he said good-bye he said : 'Tell the Emperor Napoleon that I always maintain kindly and intimate relations with him. Tell him also that it is not true that Austria is always obstructing his road.' "

"Ah!" said my interlocutor, "the Emperor said that," and his features, whose sadness had impressed us all, cleared for the first time that evening.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

[The Emperor announced that, although since he had gone to St. Cloud official receptions had ceased, he would on 27th June receive the Duke de Melzi, and with him the Austrian Ambassador. Taking the Ambassador apart, he asked him several questions about the Roumanians in Austria, their numbers and their habitat.]

"I suppose," said the Emperor—writes Hübner—"that if it were a case of granting, say to the Poles, the use of their ancient Polish flag, that the Austrian Government would refuse, on account of its Galician subjects, because the flag is already in existence and is associated with Polish independence. But the Roumanian flag is something altogether new."

I replied : "If Austria sanctions a Roumanian flag, by what right can she refuse the Polish flag to the Galicians the very day they ask for it ? "

The Emperor was silent, evidently because he did not know what to answer.

"The Belgian nation," I continued, "consists partly of a Gallic race which speaks French. What would you say, Sire, if they were given the white flag ? "

"I would object," cried the Emperor, "but it is not the same thing, for the white flag would recall the past."

"And the Roumanian flag," was my answer, "would appeal to the future: to the future of those who dream of a Roumanian independence which could be won only by the dismemberment of Turkey and the defection of many millions of Austrian subjects."

The Emperor did not reply, but evidently he was impressed. Hübner continued by pointing out that in the winter of 1854 to 1855 it was the moral support given by Austria to the Allies which paralysed the right arm of Russia, by keeping a strain on her frontier, and so giving the Allies time to bring up reinforcements.

"That is true," said the Emperor. "The Austrians did us an immense service."

Then how, asked Hübner, could Austria be pleased to see her vital interest threatened in a quarter where those of France were in no way involved?

* *Cavour to King Victor Emmanuel*

Baden, 24th July, 1858.¹

As soon as I was introduced to the Emperor he broached the subject of my voyage. He began by saying that he had decided to support Sardinia with all his might in a war against Austria, provided that the war was fought for a non-revolutionary cause and one which would be justified in the eyes of diplomacy and more especially by public opinion in France and Europe.

The search for this cause presented the most difficult problem. I decided to deal with this question before any other. I proposed first to utilize the grievances caused by Austria's failure to carry out her part of the Treaty of Commerce between us. To this the Emperor replied that the commercial question was of minor importance and was insufficient grounds for a great war destined to change the map of Europe. Next I proposed to advance again the clauses which were passed at the Congress of Paris, to protest

¹ Translated from *Carteggio Cavour-Nigra*.

against the illegal extension of Austria's power in Italy ; that is to say : the treaty of '67 between Austria and the Dukes of Parma and Modena, the prolonged occupation of the Romagna and of the Legations ; the new fortifications raised round Piacenza.

The Emperor would not agree to my suggestions. He observed that since the complaints we had advanced in '56 were considered insufficient to warrant the intervention of France and England in our favour, no one would understand why they should now justify an appeal to arms. " Besides," he added, " whilst my troops are in Rome I can scarcely insist that Austria should withdraw hers from Ancona and Bologna." The objection was reasonable. Consequently I had to abandon my second proposition. I did it with regret, as it was a frank and audacious move, entirely consistent with the noble character of Your Majesty and the people you govern.

My position was becoming embarrassing, for I had no other tangible proposal to make. The Emperor came to my assistance, and together we traversed all the Italian States in search of this elusive *casus belli*. After we had scoured the whole of the peninsula without success, we arrived, almost without knowing it, at Massa and Carrara, and here we discovered the object of our desperate search. After I had given the Emperor a lurid description of this unhappy country, of which he already had a fairly accurate knowledge, we agreed to incite the inhabitants to implore Your Majesty's protection and even to claim the cession of these Duchies to Sardinia. Your Majesty will refuse the proposed forfeiture, but will willingly embrace the cause of the oppressed populace, and despatch a haughty and threatening note to the Duke of Modena. The Duke, strong in the support of Austria, will reply impertinently. Thereupon Your Majesty will occupy Massa and the war will begin.

As it would be the Duke of Modena who would be the originator, the Emperor thought that the war would be popular not only in France but equally in England and in the rest of Europe, where, rightly or wrongly, the Prince is regarded as the prophet of despotism. Moreover, since the

Duke of Modena has acknowledged no Sovereign in France since 1830, the Emperor has less consideration for him than for any other Prince.

When this preliminary question was settled, the Emperor said : " Before going further, we must consider two serious difficulties which will confront us in Italy : the Pope and the King of Naples. I must pacify both : the first lest he should raise the Catholics in France against us, the second so that we may preserve the sympathies of Russia, who makes it a point of honour to protect King Ferdinand."

I replied that as regards the Pope, unless the Roman States should revolt, it would be easy to keep him in peaceful possession of Rome by means of the French garrison which was firmly established ; but that since the Pope had refused to follow the advice which he had given him on behalf of these countries, he could hardly resent it if the States profited by the first favourable occasion to rid themselves of a detestable system of government which the Court of Rome obstinately refused to reform. Then, as regards the King of Naples, there was no need to trouble about him unless he chose to side with Austria ; unless, indeed, his subjects took the initiative and profited by the opportunity to rid themselves of his benevolent rule.

This reply satisfied the Emperor and we passed on to the important question as to what the war was to accomplish. The Emperor willingly admitted that it was necessary to expel the Austrians from Italy neck and crop. Not an inch of territory must be left them on this side of the Alps and the Isonzo. But what was to be the subsequent organization of Italy ? After long discussions, which I will spare Your Majesty, we reached almost complete agreement on the following basis, which we both admitted must be open to modification according to the changes and chances of the war. The Valley of the Po, Romagna, and the Legations were to constitute the Kingdom of Upper Italy under the rule of the House of Savoy. The Pope would retain Rome and its immediate surroundings. The remainder of the Papal States, with Tuscany, would form the Kingdom of Central Italy. We did not touch upon the territorial boundaries of

the Kingdom of Naples. The four Italian States would form a Confederation after the model of the German Confederation, the Presidency of which would be given to the Pope as compensation for the loss of the greater part of his States.

I consider this arrangement entirely satisfactory. As Sovereign by right of the richest and strongest part of Italy, Your Majesty will practically rule the whole peninsula.

In the probable event that Your Majesty's uncle and cousin will prudently retire to Austria, the choice of Sovereigns for Florence and Naples has been left in abeyance. At the same time the Emperor did not conceal the pleasure it would give him to see Murat restored to his father's throne ; whilst for my part I suggested that the Duchess of Parma should occupy the Pitti Palace, at any rate temporarily. This last idea gave infinite satisfaction to the Emperor, who apparently dreads being accused of persecuting the Duchess of Parma, who is a Bourbon Princess.

After we had settled the future of Italy the Emperor asked what France would receive, and whether Your Majesty would cede Savoy and the County of Nice. I replied that Your Majesty accepted the principle of nationalities and acknowledged that Savoy belonged by right to France ; consequently he was ready to make the sacrifice, though it would cost him infinite pain to renounce a country which had been the cradle of his family, and a people who had given his ancestors many proofs of their affection and devotion. As regards Nice, the question was different ; its people owed their origin, their language, and their customs more to Piedmont than to France, so that their accession to the Empire would be a direct contradiction of the very principle for which we were fighting. At this the Emperor fidgeted with his moustache, but merely added that these were secondary matters which there would be ample time to settle later.

Whilst considering the means by which the war is to be brought to a happy conclusion, the Emperor emphasized the importance of isolating Austria, so that we should have no one else to deal with.. This is his reason for insisting that the war should be fought on an issue which would not alarm

the other Continental Powers and which would be popular in England. The Emperor seemed convinced that our plan fulfilled this double object. He counts positively on the neutrality of England ; he urged us to make every effort to work upon public opinion in that country, so that it may force its Government, which is its slave, to undertake nothing in favour of Austria. Similarly, he reckons that the antipathy of the Prince of Prussia for the Austrians will prevent Prussia from declaring against us. As regards Russia, the Emperor holds the repeated promise of the Emperor Alexander that he will not oppose his projects in Italy. If the Emperor is under no illusion—and after all that he has told me I am inclined to believe him—the matter will be reduced to a straight fight between France and ourselves on the one side and Austria on the other.

At the same time the Emperor considers that, even reduced to these proportions, the question still is of extreme importance and presents immense difficulties. There is no denying that Austria has immense military resources. [And the Emperor, considering how stubbornly the Austrians had fought his uncle, decided that he could not undertake the campaign with less than 300,000 men, of whom 100,000 should be Piedmontese. The French, he thought, would advance down the right bank of the Po from the base of Spezia.

[He promised that France should provide the munitions, and said he would use his influence to float a loan for the Sardinian Government. So far the conversation had lasted from 11 to 3 in the afternoon : at this point the Emperor dismissed Cavour, telling him to return an hour later for a drive.]

At the appointed hour we took our seats in an elegant phaeton, drawn by American horses, which the Emperor drove himself, and followed by a single servant. For the next three hours he drove me through the valleys and forests, which make the Vosges one of the most picturesque districts of France.

Scarcely had we left the streets of Plombières before the Emperor opened the subject of Prince Napoleon's marriage,

and asked Your Majesty's intentions on this point. I replied that Your Majesty had been in a most embarrassing position when I communicated to him Bixio's overtures, since you were doubtful as to what value he, the Emperor, attached to them ; you really were at a complete loss since you recalled certain contradictory conversations that Your Majesty had with him in Paris in 1855, concerning Prince Napoleon's matrimonial intentions towards the Duchess of Genoa. I added that this uncertainty was increased after Your Majesty's interview with Dr. Conneau, who, when pressed by Your Majesty and myself, admitted that not only had he received no instructions, but that he was completely ignorant of the Emperor's views on the subject. I submitted that, although Your Majesty attached immense importance to an action which might be so agreeable to himself, he was most reluctant to marry his daughter on account of her youth, and did not wish to insist on a choice which might be distasteful to her. That, if the Emperor was set upon it, Your Majesty yourself would raise no insuperable objection but that the ultimate decision must rest with your daughter.

The Emperor answered that he earnestly desired that his cousin should marry Princess Clothilde ; that he would choose an alliance with the House of Savoy in preference to any other ; that if he had not commissioned Conneau to speak to Your Majesty it was because he was doubtful about making advances before he knew that they would be welcome.

As to the conversation with Your Majesty of which I had reminded him, the Emperor at first seemed to have forgotten it, but after a time he said : " I remember quite well having told the King that my cousin had done wrong in asking the hand of the Duchess of Genoa ; but it was because I thought it most unsuitable that he should speak to her of marriage within so few months of her husband's death."

The Emperor referred several times to the question of the marriage. He said, with a laugh, it is quite possible that he had sometimes spoken unkindly of his cousin to Your Majesty, he had often been angry with the Prince, but really he was very fond of him and appreciated his excellent qualities, and Napoleon's recent conduct had won him the esteem and

affection of France. "Napoleon," he added, "is much better than his reputation ; he is a grumbler, he loves to contradict, but he has plenty of wit, no lack of judgment, and a sound heart." This is true : that Napoleon has wit, Your Majesty knows for himself, and the many conversations I have had with him bear it out. The dexterity with which he presided over the Exhibition proves his judgment. As to his heart, his constancy, whether to his friends or his mistresses, proves its excellence. A heartless man would not have left Paris in the middle of the Carnival to pay a last visit to Rachel who was dying at Cannes, and that after they had been separated for four years.

In my answers to the Emperor I have always been careful not to offend, but I have avoided giving any definite pledge. At the end of the day, just before we parted, the Emperor said : "Since the King is reluctant to marry his daughter so young, I should not insist upon an immediate marriage ; I should be willing to wait a year or more if necessary. All I desire is to know how I stand ; so will you ask the King to consult his daughter and to give me a positive answer as to his intentions. If he consents to the marriage, let him fix the date ; I ask no guarantee except our plighted word." Then we parted ; the Emperor pressed my hand and bade me farewell, saying : "Trust me as I trust you."

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

16th June, 1858.

There is nothing so difficult to deal with as a jealous man, and as to getting Walewsky away for a few hours from Fontainebleau, leaving Madame behind him, is out of the question. He is always thinking whether his Imperial Majesty is not cuckolding him, which he may be sure he is.

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

30th August, 1858.

I have had some conversation with Lord Palmerston since he saw the Emperor. It would seem that there was no subject that was not broached between them. Lord Palmerston

says that all His Majesty's language with regard to England and the Alliance was excellent, and that, if words are to be trusted to, there is no danger in his policy with respect to us. There were three things which struck Lord Palmerston particularly.

Talking of naval warfare, the Emperor said, as if with a meaning, that the whole system had changed and that the French would build *no more large ships*.

Secondly the Emperor seemed very inquisitive to know what England would do if France and Austria were to come to loggerheads in Italy. Lord Palmerston told him that of course everything would depend on the cause of the quarrel. The Emperor spoke with his usual jealousy of our intimacy with Austria.

Thirdly. His Majesty spoke with great distrust of Russia—said she would require watching, though she was crippled for many years to come. All this is new and a good sign, for, when I last spoke to His Majesty on the subject of Russia, he could not believe that our intelligence as to the state of Russia was correct.

With regard to Turkey the Emperor said that it was a Government with which there was nothing to be done, and Lord Palmerston told him that Turkey was not fairly judged in France, that she was always compared with civilized nations, whereas she should be compared with herself—that is, statesmen should look back to what she was a quarter of a century ago, and compare it with her present state, when the progress she had made would be found to be immense.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Cowley

8th September, 1858.

I saw Howden¹ yesterday, who fancies that he was recalled to please the Emperor, who is angry with him for having got the railway into Spain to be carried by the coast line, which is best for English interests, instead of its going by the inland line, which would have been best for French interests.

¹ British Ambassador at Madrid.

* *Signor Nigra to Count Cavour*

1st October, 1858.¹

Yesterday, 30th September, I was admitted to the presence of the Emperor, who received me with his customary kindness. After having paid him certain compliments from the King, I communicated to him the request of the Duke d'Aumale and, in accordance with His Majesty's command, asked him to read the letter which Your Excellency wrote to me before I started. I told the Emperor that if the King had listened only to the voice of his heart he would not have hesitated to reply favourably to the instances of a near and unhappy relation, but that since, above all things, he was anxious not to displease the Emperor, he had charged me to ask his advice. At first the Emperor seemed surprised ; he told me he was considering what effect the admission which the Duke de Chartres made in the Academy of Turin would have upon the country ; but after reflecting for a few moments he said : "*That is all the same to me.*" Before taking leave of His Imperial Majesty I repeated the question in the hopes of obtaining a more explicit answer, but again the Emperor answered by the same phrase that I have underlined above.

After this the Emperor led the conversation to Italian affairs. His Majesty said that he had studied attentively the political and military notes which the King had sent him through Your Excellency : that their criticisms seemed to him very serious and very fair. As a result he was ready to start the campaign at the time fixed by the King, that is to say between the end of Spring and the beginning of Summer. "Whilst waiting," the Emperor added, "I will devote myself without delay to the financial question which bristles with difficulties ; for this unhappy Crimean War has placed us in a very serious position financially."

Once again the Emperor reverted to the pretext for the war. I told him that the King and Your Excellency never forgot this delicate point, and certainly they would not have let slip any favourable opportunity that might offer. But for lack of a better, and counting also a little on chance and upon

¹ Translated from *Carteggio Cavour-Nigra*, pp. 157-8.

the mistakes of our common enemy, they were adhering for the time being to the formula suggested by the Emperor himself. He asked me if I thought much time would be required to put the Massa and Carrara plan into execution. I replied that it was impossible to guess the time that the Duke of Modena would take to answer our note, but in our opinion the time would not be long, and that, as to the address, we could procure that now if necessary.

Before changing the subject the Emperor charged me to beg the King and Your Excellency to study the ins and outs of the question. In his opinion the issue of the struggle will depend in great measure on the grounds, more or less clever, more or less justifiable, on which the war is started. The Emperor considers it almost essential that public opinion should favour us, not only in Italy, and in France, but above all in England if we wish to keep that country from sympathizing with our enemies.

"Have you not any boundary dispute with Austria," added the Emperor, "any old neighbourly quarrel which would provide a plausible pretext for a rupture?"

"Sire," I replied, "if your Majesty does not seek it, we will find the pretext, if it is allowable to give that name to a veritable *casus belli*: it is the measure of the *sequestrations*."

"Unhappily, that is over," retorted the Emperor, "and may not be revived."

His Imperial Majesty asked if it might not be expedient that the protest of the inhabitants of Massa and Carrara should be addressed to France as well as to Sardinia, in case this plan was adopted. Although I had no instructions on this point I did not hesitate to reply that in my opinion it would give rise to most serious difficulties.

"The inhabitants of the Duchy," I told him, "may be right in addressing themselves to the King of Sardinia, whom Europe is accustomed to regard as the natural defender of Italy, but they would have no right whatever to address themselves to the Emperor of the French . . ."

"Than to the Turks," interrupted my august companion.

"I did not say to the Sultan," I resumed, "but, say, to the Queen of Great Britain. Besides, if the address bore

Your Majesty's name, Austria would have very little difficulty in solving the riddle, and in this case, rather than expose herself to a war which it is her chief interest to avoid, she would confine herself to a simple diplomatic intervention into which she would probably manage to drag England and some of the other Great Powers."

The Emperor seemed to accept this view, and said that after all it would be better if the address were sent to the King alone.

His Imperial Majesty asked whether Italy—Lombardy in particular—was ready to second the move which was in preparation. I replied in the affirmative . . . The Emperor inquired also within what territorial limits we could count on the loyal co-operation of the Italians. I did not hesitate to answer that all who spoke Italian, even in the Tyrol, were with us, and abhorred Austria, and I do not think I was exaggerating.

Afterwards the Emperor explained to me the purpose of the mission to the Czar which had been entrusted to Prince Napoleon. The Prince is to put the matter clearly before the Emperor of Russia and to persuade him to hold Germany in check during the war in Italy, by threatening to draw the sword in favour of Piedmont and France as soon as Germany showed the slightest inclination to side with Austria.

"Such," said the Emperor, "is the mission that I have assigned to the Prince. I am very hopeful of his success. At Stuttgart the Czar and I promised each other not to undertake anything important without a previous understanding. In any case you may be sure the Prince will do his utmost to succeed. There is no fear that he will fail for want of trying."

The Emperor then told me that the Prince, who is due to return here in a few days, will be delighted to accept the King's invitation during the first days of November.

At this point of the conversation the Emperor repeated the questions he had already asked at our previous meeting as to the intentions of the King and Princess Clothilde concerning the proposed marriage between Her Royal Highness and Prince Napoleon. I was expecting this question,

and hastened immediately to answer according to the instructions which our Royal Master had graciously given me.

The Emperor listened to me gravely and quietly, his eyes dull and fixed, his face impassible. But under this semblance of calm and coldness, he betrayed signs of actual anxiety.

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

31st October, 1858.

I doubt if we shall hear much more of the colonization scheme. The Emperor spoke to me very much in that sense yesterday, saying that he regretted that France had colonies, that it was so difficult to maintain them in a prosperous state, that they were a weakness to the Mother Country, and that the necessity of protecting their commerce prevented France from buying in the most advantageous markets—a rather more Free Trade doctrine than I have yet heard from His Majesty's lips.

With regard to England, I have never heard the Emperor's language more friendly. . . .

He touched on Prince Napoleon's visit to Warsaw and said that the Emperor of Russia had shown His Imperial Highness every sort of confidence . . . The Czar in talking of Turkey and her prospects had said that he would spend his last rouble and send his last man to prevent the establishment of a Greek Empire. The course of the conversation, however, led the Emperor (Louis Napoleon) to speak of his general European policy. He expressed himself much as follows.

I am told that my policy is tortuous, but I am not understood. I am blamed for coquetting with Austria one day and with Russia the next, and it is inferred therefore that I am not to be depended upon. But my policy is very simple. When I came to my present position I saw that France wanted peace, and I determined to maintain peace with the Treaties of 1815, so long as France was respected and held her own in the Councils of Europe. But I was equally resolved, if I was forced into war, not to make peace until a better equilibrium was secured to Europe. I have no ambitious views like the first Emperor, but if other countries

gain anything France must gain something also. Well, when driven into war with Russia, I thought that no peace would be satisfactory which did not resuscitate Poland, and I humoured Austria in the hope that she would assist me in this great work. She failed me, and after peace was made I looked to the amelioration of Italy.

* *Napoleon III to Alexander II*

Paris, 22nd December, 1858.

I hope Your Majesty is not tired of the sight of my handwriting. But the question is of extreme importance, and I beg that you will allow me once more to explain it frankly and in its entirety.

After the war was finished we appreciated one another's worth and relied upon one another. Now chance places us in a similar position. Your Majesty would like to alter a part of the Treaty of Paris, I would like to alter a part of the Treaty of 1815.

Nevertheless, we are both forced to respect the existing treaties unless war should necessitate a new Congress.

A favourable circumstance will soon present itself. The more we make common cause, the stronger we shall be to dictate our terms to the other Powers.

Let us agree to act in concert. Since we rely upon one another, it is obvious that in the making of peace each of us should undertake to advance, in so far as he can or shall be able, the interests of his ally. The Treaty of Alliance naturally resolves itself thus :—

Firstly, each contributes to the struggle according to his desires and means.

Secondly, at the making of peace each engages to promote the interests of his ally.

Outside these wide and logical bounds I see for ourselves no noble or worthy cause of action. It would be unbecoming to Your Majesty or myself to haggle over words or different interpretations. Everything between us should be clear and open. I hope Your Majesty will understand my words and that, save for any awkwardness in their expression, you will agree with any ideas that they convey.

I may add that according to the news which I have received from Piedmont it seems that war will break out some time next May.

I was delighted to receive the Grand Duke Constantine. The King of Piedmont had spoken confidentially to him, but I told him nothing definite ; although it cost me a good deal not to open my heart to a Prince whom I love and esteem so sincerely.

(The Emperor's actual words on New Year's Day, 1859, were : "J'espere que l'année qui s'ouvre ne fera que cimenter nos alliances pour le bonheur des peuples et la paix de l'Europe."

These could be interpreted as either conciliatory or menacing : the tone in which they were spoken was genial, but when repeated in Paris they sounded sinister.

On 12th December, 1858, Hubner complained that certain newspapers were making war on Austria, that the *Moniteur* had replied ambiguously, and then only after a long delay, and that there was a vague anxiety at the bottom of everyone's mind.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

26th December, 1858.

(Hübner, sent in 1848, was a man of no family, and therefore had to contend with grudges against him at both the Tuileries and the Hofburg.)

The Emperor has now taken a personal dislike to him and treats him very ill. This goes to Hübner's heart, who has not *sang froid* or independence enough to hide it, and if I dared give advice on so delicate a matter I should recommend him to ask to be removed elsewhere. Until that is done, Austria will have no influence here.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

2nd January, 1859.

Prince Napoleon was doing all he could in the sense of republicanism and war, and was supporting the radical Press. Walewsky was doing all he could to counteract this influence, and told Hübner that the Emperor's only wish had been to appear conciliatory and for that reason he had mentioned a tension which was no secret to anyone.

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

9th January, 1859.

The Emperor has more than once declared to me that he never could (I presume on account of the French clergy) consent to the slightest diminution of the temporal possessions of the Pope.

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

12th January, 1859.

The French Government have got it into their heads that the King of the Belgians, the Duke of Saxe Coburg, and the Prince Consort are promoting a German Union against France. A few days ago the Prince de Chimay, whom the King of the Belgians employs in matters personal to himself and the Emperor, returned for the winter to Paris, and was the bearer of a letter from the King to the Emperor on the subject of some ceremonial affairs. When the Prince gave the letter to the Emperor the latter took him to task in very measured language. He said that although the institutions of Belgium were distasteful to him, that he had to complain of her Press, the asylum she gave to refugees, he had endeavoured to keep on the best terms with the Belgian Government whatever it might be, but that *the existence* of Belgium was incompatible with a bad understanding with France, that he had already called the King's attention to this fact, and now called it again. Anything that he could do to put the commercial relations between the two countries on a footing agreeable to Belgium he would do with pleasure, but he would not tolerate the influence of the King being turned against him. His Majesty went on to say that the Duke of Saxe Coburg had been very instrumental in bringing about the change of government in Prussia, and this change, inasmuch as it was hostile to Russia, was displeasing to him. In fact the Emperor seems to have spoken of Prussia more in the terms of a province than of a great state.

There is danger in all this because, if the Emperor once suspects that a Coalition is forming against him, I am much mistaken in his character if such a suspicion does not drive him to commit some desperate act.

The Emperor to the Spanish Ambassador

14th January, 1859.

"I desire peace, I desire it with all my heart, but circumstances may prove too strong." They had represented to him the immense drain on the public funds. "I have not the Treasury behind me," was his answer, "but France is with me."

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

20th January, 1859.

(The Emperor had said that he could not help Sardinia unless Austria were the aggressor.)

Cavour told Galliena the other day that there was nothing for it but war. I think there may be something else, and that is, his fall. So long as he remains in power I shall not feel tranquil. He has an influence over the Emperor for which I cannot account unless some foolish promise has been made him. It is evident that the Emperor will not bind himself too strongly, not knowing what the chapter of accidents may produce. Perhaps also he is hanging back until Napoleon's marriage is a settled thing. What a disgrace to Victor Emmanuel, selling his daughter to such a man. I am told that she is very much opposed to the match herself.

Lord Cowley to the Duke of Cambridge

22nd January, 1859.

I do not think the Emperor has any fixed ideas in regard to Italy. What he would like, I presume, would be to give Lombardy to Sardinia and take Savoy himself. But when it happens, as it has often been my lot, to discuss with him the different Italian chimeras which agitate his brain, he generally ends the conversation by admitting that the position is so surrounded by difficulties that it appears insoluble. . . .

Your Royal Highness will naturally ask what, then, has given rise to the panic which has spread throughout Europe? Various circumstances have contributed to it, but most of all the intemperate language held by Prince Napoleon and his

newspapers and Cavour's speech at Turin. Both one and the other breathed war with a vengeance, and when upon the top of these comes the Emperor's speech to Hübner, France took the alarm and communicated it to the rest of the world.

(Cowley thought the only aggressor possible would be Sardinia.)

On 29th January, according to the arrangement made between the Emperor and Cavour at Plombières, Prince Napoleon married Princess Clothilde of Savoy, a girl of 15. Victor Emmanuel had hesitated, but Napoleon asked why one should hesitate to accept as husband a man who had shown very good feelings in his relations with his mistresses.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Cowley

2nd February, 1859.

I wish Austria out of Italy, but should lament her being weakened north of the Alps. If she were dismembered France and Russia would shake hands across Germany, and the independence of Europe would be gone. But France and Austria ought to evacuate the Roman States, and leave the Pope to settle matters with his own subjects.

(Prince Napoleon Jerome now returned to Paris with the bride, Princess Clothilde of Savoy, the girl of 15, who had been bargained for at Plombières.)

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon*¹

6th February, 1859.

"The Bride," wrote Lord Cowley, "looks a mere child, but conducts herself with wonderful aplomb. She did not seem in the least embarrassed, and spoke a few words to the Nuncio and each of the Ambassadors with much affability. She has a very Austrian face and reminds me of what I recollect of Marie Louise. The Empress and Princess Mathilde speak very favourably of her—but when one sees this child sacrificed, for it is nothing else, to the ambition of her father and Cavour, what can one think of such men? It is positively horrible to see that poor frail

¹ Reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

little creature by the side of that brute (I can call him nothing else) to whom she has been immolated. For my part I cannot and have not congratulated anyone on the event.

"The Banquet last night was magnificent—I have seldom seen a finer sight. There was a chorus placed in the gallery who sang during the whole time, whether from accident or design, the most revolutionary choruses from *William Tell* and *Masaniello*. . . . No two pieces could have been so unfortunately chosen as the plays which followed the banquet, for a young girl just married and who had hardly been to a play in her life—*Le Pour et le Contre* and *Un Soufflet n'est jamais Perdu*. You probably know them both, and all I can say is that nobody knew exactly which way to look."

On 10th February Walewsky admitted that the election of Couza for the two Danubian principalities was not unacceptable to France. He also spoke of the formal reception, splendidly arranged, but marred by the silence of the crowd, of Princess Clothilde. "We do not greet the little one," said the workmen, "because she brings us war." After the great dinner of welcome given at the Tuileries, the Emperor came straight to the Austrian Ambassador and said in a tone that those around could hear that he much regretted that his words on New Year's Day had been taken as they had. "It is said also," he added to Hübner, "that there was a coldness between you and me. Nothing could be more false."

If the Emperor's words had awakened anxiety, answered Hübner, it was not astonishing. Europe would feel anxious whenever the Tuileries was not on good terms with Austria or with England. "During the war in the East," he said, "when France and Italy were openly allied, Italy enjoyed the utmost tranquility ; at the first rumour that the harmony between these two great Powers is disturbed, Italy becomes restless."

"What you say is absolutely true," answered the Emperor. "In 1856 Italy was quiet—but, you will admit that Italy has its national sentiment."

Hübner did not agree with that. An Italian nation, he insisted, in the political sense, had never existed ; to attempt to create an Italy would be sterile and vain.

"Ah!" said the Emperor, "I should be only too glad to withdraw my soldiers from the Papal States. I am telling you nothing; we are only chatting here, we are not doing business."

"Allow me, Sire, to remind you of what I have several times had the honour of telling the Emperor, though he has refused to believe it, namely that the proposals which he is prepared to make to my Sovereign, and which would tend to modify the boundaries of Northern Italy, would be unacceptable."

The Emperor said nothing, but his manner suggested a man who is saying: "I know that already," and who says it merely to break the ice with someone with whom he is annoyed, but with whom he does not want to break completely.

After some minutes of silence His Majesty continued: "You exercise a powerful influence in Italy."

"We exercise the influence natural to a great Power, and to an Italian Power, which, by virtue of treaties, we have become."

"Yes, your right is incontestable," said the Emperor.

"And as a powerful neighbour, Sire, you also exercise a powerful influence in Italy. It is upon the influence of these two great Powers that the security of the Princes and the tranquility of the Italian States depends. That is a fact which we must needs accept, for I doubt gravely whether the best reforms would render the Italian governments stronger, or their evil stars less daring and less dangerous."

The Emperor was silent.

"We are all very anxious to hear the speech, Sire, which you are to make the day after to-morrow. It will be a very serious pronouncement."

"I shall explain the situation," the Emperor answered. "I regret that there are so many points on which Austria and I disagree."

His tone, in this and other words which I do not remember accurately, gave me the impression that some change was working in the Emperor's mind.

Count Walewsky to Lord Cowley

1st March, 1859.

Le Piémont ou plutôt M. de Cavour s'agit : son emprunt a manqué : il comprend très bien la portée des conséquences de votre mission, l'évacuation des États Romains l'inquiète, car elle n'était pas dans son programme. Tout cela le trouble. . . Mais si à Vienne, on apprécie avec exactitude la situation, le Comte Cavour s'agitera dans le vide et il finira peut être par devenir lui même la victime de toutes ses folles conceptions.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

25th March, 1859.

"M. de Cavour is sly, tricky, and essentially a quibbler." He was combining with the Emperor to outwit and lie to Walewski.

(Cowley had heard that Cavour had rather browbeaten the Emperor, that it would be a *lacheté* to abandon Sardinia, and the Emperor had said that Cavour desired to *remain* armed while the Congress with Austria took place. Prince Napoleon spoke of non-intervention in Italy, but the Emperor next day admitted to Lord Cowley that he was ready to make war on Austria.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury

1st April, 1859.

I believe I have made out pretty well what the Emperor's game has been in this Italian question. Cavour made him believe in the summer that an insurrection in Lombardy was at hand and obtained a qualified promise of assistance if Sardinia went to the assistance of Lombardy and was invested. The Emperor first spoke of it to Napoleon in the month of September at Biarritz, and told him Cavour's plans. Napoleon at first thought them impracticable, and tried to dissuade the Emperor, who then sent him to Warsaw in order to see whether the Russian Government would aid. . . The Russian Government has always dissuaded the Emperor from his dangerous policy, although they would not have been sorry to have seen Austria receive a good licking.

Baron Hübner to Count Buol-Schauenstein

1st April, 1859.

"M. de Cavour is in Paris," said Walewsky to Hübner. "He will receive my resignation on his return to Turin; it is presented as a satisfaction for the past, and a guarantee for the future. The Emperor has spurned this inconceivable claim, which he withdrew at once. He asked to be admitted to the Congress. At this price, he offered preliminary disarmament. On the eve of M. de Cavour's departure the Emperor summoned us both and, in a meeting which lasted several hours, I proved that the admission of Sardinia to a council of the Great Powers would be impossible. The Emperor took my part, and the guests of Princess Mathilde, with whom M. de Cavour dined after leaving His Majesty, were immensely struck by his expression of despair. . . .

"M. de Cavour," continued Walewsky, "came to see me the day after our joint audience with the Emperor, in a frame of mind which he did not trouble to conceal. It displayed despair, fury, and utter defeat. He threw off all restraint. I do not submit to such language as he used, and answered him in his own coin, and M. de Cavour left almost without bidding me farewell. He went straight to the Emperor who spoke to him softly but offered no grounds for hope. I hear from his friends that M. de Cavour, who has had no subsequent audience, departed with rage in his heart, utterly at a loss what to do next."

(In a short time the Emperor admitted to Cowley that he was expecting war with Austria.)

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Malmesbury*

8th April, 1859.

"Here," wrote Lord Cowley, "was the cloven foot with a vengeance, and I gave His Majesty my mind in consequence. I hope I did not go too far when I told him that it was my conviction that if he attempted, without reason, any scheme so iniquitous he would have both the moral and material

efforts of England arrayed against him. I gave him all the reasons in my power to show him that no Government in England would ever assist in an uncalled for attack upon an unoffending ally. If His Majesty wanted to unite Great Britain as one man against him he had only to take the course he had hinted at. The Emperor seemed somewhat surprised at the energetic reproof which, I confess, I gave him and he expressed doubts as to whether I was correct in my judgment, but I begged him to write to whom he would in England if he doubted me—to you, to Palmerston, to Clarendon, even to John Russell, and I was convinced he would hear no two opinions."

"Recollect," the Ambassador reported himself as saying, "that it is fearful to have, as you have, peace and war within your hands. Nobody can contest your right to feel deep sympathy with Italy. It is in your power to help by pacific means. It is not Italy alone, but the whole world that may suffer should you take a wrong decision. At this moment the honour of France is untouched. You admit that you have no cause of quarrel with Austria. For God's sake do not make one. Once more I repeat, peace or war are within your gift. God grant you may make a right choice."

"I said these words with all the solemnity that a real feeling of the truth of them could give."¹

(Cowley asked the Emperor whether he wanted peace or war.)

He replied that he should be very glad if peace could be maintained, and that he was not afraid of war, and he added that if he was to tell me his inmost conviction, it was that war was unavoidable. There was so much irritation everywhere, there was such a general sentiment prevalent that war could not be avoided, that his instinct told him it would come. Even if the Congress met it would be but to patch up matters for the moment, for he could not conceal from himself that the very objects which the Congress would try to bring about would, if their efforts were unsuccessful,

¹ Reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

produce a revolution in Italy. Then he said Austria would begin again. . . .

With respect to what could be done for Italy the Emperor seemed to be under no illusions, and it is clear as daylight to me that the bottom of his thoughts is the expusion of Austria from Lombardy. His Majesty perhaps hardly admits this to himself, but that, depend upon it, is his aim and the object of his ambition.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

13th April, 1859.

There was certainly no overt act on the part of Austria which could give a colourable pretext for attacking her. Notwithstanding this, in a time of profound peace, she is menaced to her heart's core, for nothing else can be said when what we gave her brought her to the eve of bankruptcy. Well, we try to make matters up. Austria listens to us, and in spite of her usual pride and obstinacy, gives us to understand that she will take our advice and make certain concessions to France. She then finds a Congress proposed by our enemy. She agrees to it, accepts all our conditions, and makes one herself, that Sardinia shall previously disarm; finding that this condition is objected to, she yields to public opinion and merely asks that, in proof of the honesty of France and Sardinia, a general disarmament shall be agreed to before going into Congress; in fact, wants to be assured that the Congress is not to be made a pretext to gain time.

Now look at France. She accepts my mission to Vienna, then throws me over; asks me to accept a Congress which the Government agree to on condition of her insisting on Sardinia disarming. She accepts the condition. Again throws us over, and now wants Austria to agree to disarm without any corresponding assurance on the part of Sardinia. Can there be a choice between the two?

(On 21st April, however, writing to Malmesbury, Cowley put the blame on Austria, because Brûl, after Sardinia agreed to general disarmament, summoned Sardinia's troops

to disarm, but he concluded : " I cannot forget that it is the Emperor's ambiguous words and dark dealings that have brought us to this crisis.")

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

4th June, 1859.

(Cowley was persuaded by the Empress not only to believe that the Emperor did not want the war, but would have been glad to get out of it.)

The Empress who perhaps knows him better than any other says that he will be moderate in success.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

18th July, 1859.

The King of Sardinia ended with a downright quarrel with Cavour, and afterwards told the Emperor that it was impossible to deal with such a fellow and that he would gladly give a million to get him to America.

(The Emperor landed at Genoa on 9th April, 1859, to take command of the Franco-Italian army. After freeing Lombardy he signed a pact with the Emperor of Austria at Villafranca on 11th July.)

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

28th July, 1859.

I infer that what put the finishing stroke to the war was Massimo d'Azeglio's mission to Bologna. As soon as the Emperor saw, or fancied he saw, that he was being made a tool for Sardinian projects, he determined to cut short these intrigues by making peace.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell¹

7th August, 1859.

When I asked His Majesty whether he hoped to induce the Pope to grant such free institutions as would permit His Holiness to co-operate in a Confederation with the other States of Italy having such institutions, the reply of the

¹ *The Paris Embassy*, pp. 187-9.

Emperor rather led to the opinion that the Sovereigns of Italy might grant such institutions as would permit them to co-operate with the Pope. Let me, however, not be misunderstood. No man, I believe, would hail with sincerer pleasure large and liberal reforms in the Roman States than the Emperor, but seeing that there are obstacles to this which he cannot and dare not overcome, it is evident, as I think, that he is applying to Italy the old saying of Mahomet and the Mountain and that he whispers to himself : If the Pope won't go to Sardinia, Sardinia must come to the Pope. . . .

He said that when he had put himself at the head of the Army, he had stated (perhaps he had been wrong in doing so) that it was with the intention of making war upon Austria and not upon the Princes of Italy, and in his proclamation from Milan he had repeated this statement. When, therefore, almost the first observation made to him by the Emperor of Austria was that he must stipulate for the reinstatement of his relatives, he had replied that he had no objection—the Emperor of Austria had evinced the greatest astonishment at this reply, and had at once said that one of the greatest difficulties to peace was thereby removed, and the conversation having continued satisfactorily on other points, proposed that peace would be concluded immediately. . . .

I said that if France and Austria would agree to abstain from all armed intervention in Italy that would be the best solution of the present difficulties. The Emperor replied that Persigny had told him the same thing, but that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for no Catholic Sovereign could bind himself to the complete abandonment of the Pope.

When talking of the Pope, His Majesty expressed considerable anxiety. He said that all the accounts which he had received convinced him that the Legations would never again voluntarily return to Papal rule. In the meantime, the Queen of Spain, without consulting her Ministers, had promised His Holiness 20,000 men to recover them, and this might produce very serious complications.

I questioned the Emperor as to his appreciation of the state of public feeling in that part of Italy in which he was

engaged. He replied that there was a great deal of enthusiasm in the towns, but that the peasantry appeared very apathetic. He attributes this in some measure to the fixed idea that the Austrians would return. . . .

Nothing is more extraordinary in the many many conversations I have had with the Emperor than the want of jealousy which he at all times evinces of our aggrandizement in the Mediterranean and adjacent seas.

(After the peace Prince Richard Metternich returned to Paris as Austrian Ambassador.)

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
13th August, 1859.

The Empress, in speaking of Solferino, said that the valour of the Austrians awoke the admiration of all.

Prince Napoleon had admirable troops and brought them forward at the moment when they would no longer be exposed to the brunt of the enemy's fire.

The Emperor struck Cowley as "a debtor who hardly knows how to discharge his debts".

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
16th August, 1859.

(Metternich complained of all the obstacles to permanent peace which were arising in Zurich, and of the difficulties that the Archdukes found in returning to their dukedoms in Italy.)

"Sire," said Metternich to His Majesty, "if you want to improve a badly-brought-up child, you will fail if you tell him in advance that he won't be punished in case he disobeys."

The Emperor admitted with a smile that he regretted now, when he saw the progress made by the annexationist party on the one side and the Mazzinians on the other, that he had not exercised more firmness from the first.

"But," said His Majesty, "what might have been easy

to check at first is difficult to stop when it has gathered impetus. I greatly deplore the state of affairs in Central Italy. I did not expect that it would organize such open and powerful resistance, and I can assure you that it causes me great anxiety." But the Emperor said that ever since Villafranca he had been in a perilous position. "I am held up by the difficulties," he said, that I expected to meet, and by the sacrifices and immense losses which we reckoned that the war would cost us. Frankly I could not ask your Emperor, who had so loyally accepted the armistice, for more than we had already. Well, that raised the cry of treachery. The cries were redoubled when Turin learnt that I had consented to the restoration of the Princes. The Tuscan army was there, ready to make common cause with me—but it is difficult to turn the cannons of to-morrow on your friends of yesterday. Since then, everything that I have done to keep my promises has made me unpopular throughout Italy. Think, then, what it would be if in the cause of divine right I started to fight those to whom I am positively pledged to defend the popular cause."

As for the figures of the indemnity, those, he said, were in the hands of the Ministers, of whom he was to one and all but the servant.

"I beg you to assure the Emperor that my feelings towards him have not, and never will, change. I can see higher and further than those who occupy themselves pedantically with matters of detail. I believe that Governments whom neither of us love (the Emperor without doubt was referring to England and Prussia) are frightened because we concluded peace so quickly, and are afraid that there is something more than friendliness between us. Well, such fright is salutary and should benefit you as well as me, since it gives us great independence of action for the future. No question of details must reduce the advantage of our position, which is exceedingly strong if we choose to make it so. Personally I desire that this sentiment should continue throughout Europe. Tell the Emperor that I am seeking and preparing the means to overcome my difficulties."

* *Emperor Franz Josef I to his Mother, Archduchess Sophie Laxenburg, 1st September, 1859.*

Negotiations at Zurich were at a standstill. The Emperor Napoleon is, and remains in spite of everything, a rogue.

*Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
5th September, 1859.*

(The difficulties of the peace conference had thoroughly irritated the Emperor of Austria, and it was the task of Metternich to try and win over Napoleon. Napoleon answered the Ambassador with his accustomed frankness.)

"I have already acknowledged," he said, "that I am honestly ashamed of all that has happened, and of my exactions. On the other hand, I have told you of the difficulties that surround me. This is my position. I acted in good faith; I ask you to believe this and to defend me if need be at Vienna. What I told the Emperor at Villafranca was true. I stopped the war because I feared the sacrifice of life which it would still cost me, because I dreaded revolution at my heels—Kossuth and Klapka as auxiliaries. I was to be regarded as the greatest scoundrel in Europe. Finally, I foresaw that sooner or later the war must become general, and I proposed to the Emperor of Austria that we should reach an understanding and conclude peace. When I saw your young Emperor I could refuse him nothing. I agreed to everything without considering the difficulties that would result. For example, I was so far from imagining that, after the Grand Duke of Tuscany abdicated, his son would not immediately be recalled or be so strongly opposed, that I quite forgot what I could and should have done immediately: that is to occupy Tuscany and so prevent what has happened since. Now I can do nothing without bloodshed. England would be down on me and I should be renouncing all my promises and the cause for which I sacrificed the lives of Frenchmen—that of independence and the principle of non-intervention. I have promised that I will not intervene, and I will not intervene. On the other hand, I am pledged in honour to the Emperor of Austria,

and the present state of affairs is impossible. I have racked my brains and the only solution I can find is what I have suggested to the Emperor.

"This is why, in my opinion, the Emperor should make new concessions, even if they are only temporary.

"An incontestable fact, like all those which arise from exalted sentiments, is the incredible dread of Austria which exists in Piedmont and in Central Italy . . . It is imperative, therefore, as a matter of form, to allay this terror, and, in my opinion, the Emperor of Austria would lose nothing by showing himself conciliatory and liberal up to a certain point. I am told that the Emperor proposes to introduce into his different provinces some kind of provincial council. Well, we should have gained much if His Majesty promised to endow Venice with an administration and a provincial Italian council."

(Metternich answered that what he feared was that the concessions demanded by Piedmont were only a means to obtain the whole of Italy. Hitherto, Napoleon had always given way to Piedmont, and reserved his exigencies for Austria.)

The Emperor assumed an air of profound distress. He told me that he was quite able to put himself in other people's places and that the Emperor of Austria was fully justified in doubting the efficacy of all the concessions which he was prepared to make. "This state of affairs in Italy is a hopeless muddle," said His Majesty. "The pressure is so great that I do not know how to check the enthusiasm of these people. I can't do it. I assure you I am very unhappy about it. What am I to do? The resistance seems so carefully organized. Every day I receive letters which prove that it is not the revolutionary party, properly so-called, which is heading the agitation; it is the well-to-do people, and they have had the cleverness to place in the forefront all my old friends who write to me that the Mazzini party has not the slightest chance of success, that order will not be disturbed, and that everything will be lost if I abandon them. My position is all the more terrible on account of my sincere affection for your Emperor. I have proclaimed and professed

it openly. I have sought every possible combination which might compensate Austria for the loss of influence to which I have subjected her. If the Emperor wished I would join him and help him to revenge himself in the East. The name '*Ost Reich*' seems to prophesy the aggrandizement of Austria in the East! Would the Emperor object to placing an Archduke at the head of the Principalities of the Danube?"

This proposal, hurled at me point-blank, was so extraordinary that it struck me dumb. The Emperor smiled at my astonishment. "But, Sire," I said, at last, "In order to place an Archduke at the head of the Principalities, it is necessary first to take possession of them."

"Very well," said the Emperor. "I should raise no objection. Besides, an Archduke might be invited by the Roumanians, if the matter was handled carefully."

"That is true," I replied with a smile. "Just as it was handled in Tuscany in order to proclaim aversion to Sardinia!"

The Emperor could not help laughing, and he did not deny the justice of my comparison.

"Seriously, Sire," I continued, "I would never dare to convey such a proposal to Vienna."

(Metternich reminded Napoleon that Palmerstonian principles would soon lead to the dismemberment of Austria, whose Emperor wanted no extension of territories, but no losses either.)

"Well," said the Emperor, "you will come round to it at last when you consult your own interests. I made war in the East, not in order to save Turkey, but to prevent Russia from appropriating it. The Sultan's power in Europe is crumbling, and certainly I will not prevent the fall, for I regard it as an anomaly. You will be wise to be prepared in case this happens."

(The Emperor finished his conversation by reminding Metternich that Francis Joseph had promised that Venice, though remaining under the Austrian sceptre, should be allowed to enter an Italian Confederation, and proposing that the two Emperors should combine to state the plan they had agreed on. If their joint wishes could not be realized, then let there be a Congress.)

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

Biarritz, 5th October, 1859.

(The Emperor had planned to send troops to China, and hoped that England and France would act in alliance there, and so improve the feeling between the two countries.)

From China the Emperor reverts of his own accord to Morocco, volunteering the most positive assurances that he had never dreamt of conquest in that quarter and that, in fact, he took no interest whatever in the affairs of that country. He blamed severely our proceedings at Madrid which he characterized as very domineering, but he said that he had advised the Spanish Government to give us satisfactory assurances if they had no dreams of conquest as they asserted. This led him to his old theme of wondering at what he calls *la petite politique* of every Government in England (from which, however, he admits that other states are not exempt), who instead of making the extension of civilization their principle are always suspicious of what others are doing. "I do not want Morocco myself," he said, "but I must confess that I would rather have a civilized neighbour like Spain than constant quarrels with the wild hordes which affect the frontier." . . .

I now come to Italy. I had heard that the Emperor was so averse to being questioned upon the subject that I had determined to say nothing to him unless he spoke to me. He did speak and it was the language of utter despair. There is a great difference between his language and that of Walewsky, a difference for which I was hardly prepared. His tone is one of great bitterness towards Austria whom he also accuses of following *une petite politique*. My impression is that he had set his heart upon obtaining the *italianizing* of Venetia, and that having failed in that he has allowed Walewsky to have his way, out of sheer lassitude and disgust. He is now quite at sea not knowing what to do and evidently looking to the chapter of accidents. He does not believe in the possibility of a central Italian Kingdom—that is to say, that the King of Sardinia could hold the Central States together. He sighs after his confederation which he sees is going to the dogs. He does not know what to do about

Tuscany, how to satisfy the Legations, how to bring the Pope to reason. He is obliged to admit that if Austria were to withdraw her German garrisons from Venetia, the Province is lost to her, and yet he sees that so long as she maintains them, she is a continual menace to Italy. He has given in to Walewsky's schemes for the solution of the Italian question by providing for Parma in Modena, not because he approves it, but because he does not know what else to do, and he would as readily give in to any other scheme which would enable him to say, "There is an end to the Italian question."

Lord Cowley to Mr. Odo Russell

7th November, 1859.

We are laying upon our oars here for the best of all reasons, that the Emperor really does not know what to do.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

10th November, 1859.

With regard to Italy in general, the Emperor said that it was impossible to arrive at the truth, that each party swore to what they believed most conducive to their own ends, and that he believed there was great exaggeration on all sides. He manifested some irritation at the King of Sardinia's conduct as unfair by him. . . .

His Majesty must be the most unprincipled deceiver and the most abandoned liar that ever lived if he considers a war with England possible. I can only say that his language with respect to England has never varied since I have known him. He has been irritated at our policy, angry with our press, and annoyed by our suspicions of him, but his language has invariably been not only to me but to others who would have wished it otherwise that he would not quarrel with England.

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
9th November, 1859.

Lively conversation with the Emperor. The Emperor Napoleon showed me a telegram from King Victor Emmanuel, in which he asks advice because, out of fear of revolution, he can decide nothing.

Napoleon told me to hesitate before replying. I said that we would protest, and intervene if Piedmont intervened.

The Emperor : " God forbid ! That would lead to another war."

Myself : " War would be better for Austria than loss of prestige from excessive weakness."

Hereupon His Majesty ignored Turkey, and offered me indifferently the Principality of the Danube, freedom of the Adriatic, or Egypt. Finally, after long discussion, His Majesty promised to advise the King against acceptance.

At Compiègne, after avoiding the Austrian Ambassador for a long time, the Emperor told him : " I wish the Italians would wash their dirty linen themselves, and I will not permit myself nor anyone else to hinder them. I want to withdraw my troops from Rome and Milan and not to worry any further over the concerns of the Italian nation. I do not wish the Holy Father to rely upon our troops in order to misgovern his States, any more than I wish them, weapons in hand, to watch the follies which are committed around them at Parma, Modena, and Florence. All this bores me and embitters my life."

Metternich came back to insist that France could not lose her place as a great power. " Your Majesty must understand me," he said emphatically.

Here the Emperor took the Ambassador's hand in his.

" I understand you perfectly," he said. " No one knows better than yourself my feelings for the Emperor of Austria. But this question of Italy is a serious embarrassment for me, and I really do not know how to release myself. I would give a great deal to see this question drowned in the sea. Put yourself in my place. What the King says is true—It is I who have awakened, exploded the revolution. My idea was great and beautiful, my intentions pure and disinterested. By invading Piedmont, you gave me a good excuse to realize a lifelong desire, that of restoring Italy to herself. I thought I had succeeded at Villafranca ; now I see that the difficulties have increased, and I am at the end of my resources. England is playing an extraordinary game, and my influence is gone. What is to be done ? "

They agreed that the only way to settle the difficulties was by a Congress. " Sound politics," said the Emperor, " consist in doing things at the right moment."

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

17th November, 1859.

Had he (the Emperor) had an idea that the people of Central Italy would have been so little disposed to take back their Sovereigns, he would have continued the war rather than have made peace as he did, but believing that what he was doing would satisfy the people, that is, that they would not object to the restoration of their Sovereigns with reformed institutions, he had entered into engagements with Austria from which he could not now recede.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

18th November, 1859.

I never saw anyone so out of spirits as he is. The whole thing weighs on his mind like a nightmare, so that if you can do anything to help him out of his scrapes I think he will be grateful. But you must bear in mind that you will not bring him to break faith with Austria or to do anything which he considers incompatible with his engagements to her.

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
Very confidential.

26th November, 1859.

After the Emperor had insinuated that the limitations which the Treaty of 1815 imposed on France necessitated the maintenance under arms of 600,000 men, he said : "Europe has grasped the fact that, to prevent a fresh debacle in France, it is necessary to contract her boundaries sufficiently to enable a foreign invader to cross the Alps or the Rhine without being disturbed—he must be able to enter through Savoy or Luxemburg. Consequently it is my duty to try to modify the parts of those treaties which are dangerous to France. By dispelling the anxieties of Europe which originated these terms, I believe that I shall dispel those of France, and she will no longer be burdened with the maintenance of a large army. The day that I obtain Savoy and Nice in the South and sufficient fortresses in the North, *my mission will be accomplished.*"

I asked His Majesty to tell me honestly if he was negotiating with Piedmont for the cession of Savoy.

The Emperor answered me that, since he had acknowledged his desire, I should take such negotiations for granted.

"There are only two ways," said the Emperor, "to finish the Italian question quickly.

"Either France and Austria must insist, if necessary by force, upon the restoration of the deposed Princes and the submission of the Legations, and that I am pledged not to do.

"Or you must establish an Archduke in Venetia with an Italian administration and an Italian army, finding your compensation elsewhere, and seek in Central Italy the material for a kingdom of the Centre—and this means neither you nor the Holy Father would care to employ."

"Then the situation," I said, "reduces itself to this: that it is impossible to solve it."

"For the moment at least," replied His Majesty, "it seems supremely difficult."

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

29th November, 1859.

(The Emperor told Cowley that he had suggested to Kissileff that Russia should propose a central Italian Kingdom composed of Tuscany, Modena, and the Romagna.) "The Emperor will do all in his power to free the Romagna from Papal Rule. . . ."

Lord Palmerston thought the Emperor should have gone further, but on 29th November, 1859, he wrote to Lord Cowley that the annexation of Tuscany by Piedmont would be dear if at the price of the cession of Savoy to France.)

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

1st January, 1860.

The Emperor said that the occupation of Rome was in fact the origin of all his difficulties. It was the first fault which had in fact superinduced so many others. He was

most anxious, as I had long known, to remove his troops from Rome, but could he justify himself to Catholic France if he did so at once.

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
3rd January, 1860.

The Emperor overwhelms me with attentions and the Empress, who has taken an immense fancy to my wife, seizes every excuse to invite us to the Tuilleries. On St. Sylvester, we were the only foreigners invited to bring the New Year in.

On the stroke of midnight, the Emperor asked me to play a waltz, and danced it with the Empress. I could not help laughing inwardly at the situation. That the Ambassador of Austria should make the Emperor dance during the first moments of the New Year seemed to say the least of it original. I could not repress the wish to play the Radetzki-Chasset and our national anthem after the Imperial couple had stopped dancing. On 1st January, 1859, the Tuilleries little expected that a year later music, so little in harmony with its traditions, would be played by the Austrian Ambassador.

On 9th January, Walewski confided to Metternich that the Emperor was trying to win England over to the annexation of Savoy.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

18th January.

I asked, as I had done before, what His Majesty hoped from a Congress, and the only answer I obtained was that he looked upon it as a lottery from which a winning number might be drawn.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

6th February, 1860.

This Savoy business is a strange story, and I cannot get to the bottom of it. The Emperor has always denied both to me and to others the existence of any engagement in the matter.

*Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell**Paris, 10th February, 1860.*

I went yesterday with the Emperor to Rambouillet and had a great deal of conversation with him in the course of the day. He began himself upon Savoy, lamenting that he should be so much misunderstood and that nobody ever gave him credit for the honesty of his intentions. What, he asked, could be more natural than that, if Northern and Central Italy were to be fused into one Kingdom, he should desire to have a frontier a little better protected on that side than it now is. It was unfair to call the annexation of a small mountainous district to France by the name of conquest or aggrandizement ; it would be nothing but a measure of legitimate defence. I remarked to His Majesty that it was not so much the actual annexation of Savoy to France which caused the distrust which had been manifested on the subject, as the way in which it had been brought forward in spite of all His Majesty's declarations on going to war. It was not unnatural for Europe to apprehend that France might equally want in a short time to put other parts of her frontier which she might consider weak in a better state of defence, and might ask for instance, for the frontier of the Rhine. People, I said, who knew nothing of His Majesty personally, could only judge him by his acts, and those acts tended to excite alarm. I then asked His Majesty whether he could be good enough to tell me what had passed on the subject with Sardinia. Some said there had been a treaty signed at Prince Napoleon's marriage to which the Emperor himself even had affixed his signature ; others that the engagement was of a less solemn nature, though engagement there was. I should really be glad to know the exact truth on these matters. The Emperor laughed, and said that secrets were secrets, but that nevertheless he would tell me word for word what had occurred. Previously to Prince Napoleon's marriage the possibility of war with Austria had been discussed between the French and Sardinian Governments, and among other arrangements depending on it, it was stipulated on the part of France, that if the events of the war were to add to the Kingdom of Sardinia



PRINCE AND PRINCESS RICHARD METTERNICH
THE DUKE DE MORYN AND M. DROUYN DE LHUY'S
From photographs in the possession of Sir Victor Wellesley

a population of 10,000 to 12,000 souls, France would put forward a claim to Savoy. These arrangements remained in the form of a project, and when the war eventually took place, he asked Cavour to convert it into a treaty, which Cavour declined, saying that it was not necessary. It does not appear, as far as I could make out, that Cavour had admitted the claim of France to Savoy in certain eventualities, but only that it might be discussed between the two Governments ; nevertheless, the Emperor considers him as morally bound to consent to it (and so, by the way, does Thouvenel), and I suppose that Cavour's present conduct in the matter is a subject of great discontent here, as it is thought that His Imperial Majesty has been done.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

15th February, 1860.

I saw the Emperor last night at Prince Napoleon's. He seemed very uncertain what he would do next. I gave him another dose of Savoy.

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen

9th March, 1860.

Metternich insists that the difficulties of France came from the conflict in Napoleon himself of the Emperor with the Carbonari, that he was often said to be his own worst enemy. "He has lucid intervals worthy of a genius, and fatal blindnesses which the most irrefutable argument cannot penetrate.

(On 6th March, at a concert at the Tuileries, the Emperor spoke before the Russian Ambassador of his resentment at the feeling against him in England. "His tone and manner were really offensive." (Letter dated 7th March to Lord John Russell, quoted in *The Paris Embassy*.)

Meanwhile, the Emperor had attempted to disarm England by making a commercial treaty with her. He insisted that French wine should be imported into England free of duty : and discussed whether iron might not have a free entry into France ; but

although nothing would induce Gladstone to allow brandy to be imported free of charge ("Small as the point is," wrote Gladstone, "we must stand to it because it is a question of honour and justice.")—nevertheless, the treaty was pushed through, and Gladstone made an eulogium of the Emperor in the House of Commons.

The Emperor to Lord Cowley

Paris, 11th March, 1860.

Please thank Mr. Gladstone for the copy of his speech which he has kindly sent me. I shall preserve it as a treasured souvenir of an eminent man whom I esteem most highly, and whose eloquence is on a level with his vast schemes.

I am delighted at the success which the English Ministry has won, for the confirmation of the Treaty of Commerce should restore the political relations of our two countries to their normal state. Notwithstanding the difficulties which surround me, notwithstanding the prejudices which still exist in France as in England, I shall continue to exert every effort to cement the alliance of our two nations more closely; since it is my profound conviction that their agreement is indispensable to the welfare of civilization, that their antagonism would be disastrous to the world.

In conclusion, you will excuse me, dear Lord Cowley, if I sometimes betray too plainly my distress that the hatreds and prejudices of a former age should revive in England like ill weeds which the continuous efforts of the hoe and the harrow fail to eradicate. Let us hope that politics will make equal progress with agriculture and industry, and that human intelligence will conquer its evil passions as it has already conquered matter.

Count Walewski to M. Thouvenel

31st March, 1860.

At the beginning of July, in connection with eventual negotiations, I remember that I informed Lord Cowley that, if Sardinia obtained a notable increase of territory, the reunion of Savoy and of the County of Nice to France

was not improbable. Some days later, indeed, I told the English Ambassador that he could inform his Government that the Emperor was disposed to conclude peace without demanding the cession of Savoy. But at that time no one dreamed there could be any question of annexing Piedmont, independently of Lombardy, Parma, Modena, Tuscany, and the Legations.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

2nd April, 1860.

(Cowley, who had been accused of being too charitable, asserted that he could no longer trust the Emperor; he continued :)

" It is not that I believe him to be a wilful deceiver. I am persuaded that when he makes a promise he means to keep it, but he thinks himself perfectly justified in breaking his word if circumstances in his opinion render it desirable. So long as he had not deceived me, I was willing to hope that he thought better things of England than to attempt a crooked policy with her. The result, I am free to confess, has not answered my anticipations. He has on three several occasions lately deliberately broken his word with us, and you will never find me ask you to trust in him again.

" I am sorry for it, for I cannot help still having a feeling of regard for him, for I have received much kindness at his hands, and cannot doubt of the goodness of his heart.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

9th April, 1860.

The Empress sent to me this afternoon to say that several of her friends and relations were compromised in this Carlist movement in Spain, and to beg me to telegraph to Buchanan to ask him to use his influence to induce the Queen of Spain to act with clemency. Her Majesty said that she felt she had no right to interfere as Empress, but that she would take it as a great kindness if by indirect means the punishment of the conspirators was made as little rigorous as possible. I should have liked to refer the matter to you but the Empress

saying the case was urgent and begging me to telegraph without delay, I sent the accompanying telegram to Buchanan, which I trust you will approve my having done.

La Nouvelle Carte de l'Europe, published in 1860 by E. About, gives already in April of that year the idea of the growth of Prussia and the dismemberment of Austria, and the expulsion of Turkey from Europe, and of an enormous Greece.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

16th April.

I was at the Tuileries last night and had some further conversation with the Emperor. I saw but little change in his language. He professed to be most anxious to do something to satisfy England and Switzerland in the Savoy question, but the more he examined it, the more complicated and difficult he found it. He said that he had been studying the map the whole day with a view of seeing what could be done, but that one difficulty or another met him at every corner.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

2nd May, 1860.

Metternich in the course of conversation yesterday let out that the Emperor had at various times spoken to him very much in the terms in which Augustus Loftus¹ represents Moustier to have used at Vienna—namely of the necessity of satisfying the legitimate expectations of France by giving her such a frontier as will enable her to disarm. There is nothing new in these ideas of the Emperor. Ever since he has been upon the throne, he has had before his eyes the idea of a pacific revision of the map of Europe, and we must now expect constant efforts in that direction. We must be prepared for hints given to Prussia that she may extend her territories in the North, provided that France obtains compensation on Rhine, and the future danger, to my mind, lies in those hints being unattended to and the Emperor giving way to internal pressure and picking a quarrel with Prussia.

¹ See Appendix.

Mr. Cobden to Lord Cowley

11th May, 1860.

A Mr. Robinson, an iron-master, had appeared, and Cobden wrote : " I am sure that His Majesty would be pleased to see a man at the very top of the British iron trade." Iron was being weighed in the tariff against wine.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

28th May, 1860.

I had a good deal of conversation last night with the Emperor respecting Russia and the Eastern Question, and I am more and more satisfied that there is no understanding of any kind with Russia. But His Majesty is too much disposed to trust in Gortschakoff's grandiloquent phrases of anxiety for the maintenance of the Turkish Empire, as if a Minister, as I observed to His Majesty, who really wished to uphold a State, would think that the best means of arriving at that end was by holding that State up to the opprobrium of the world.

On 25th June, 1860, Metternich wrote from Fontainebleau, after having had an interesting talk with the Emperor about his visit to Baden. A few days before the Emperor had complained to Metternich that the Russians would rather that the Principalities remained Turkish than that they fell under the domination of Austria ; what Russia really wanted was that there should be an independent confederation in that corner. " The Government of Piedmont," Metternich had added, " is too weak to maintain itself in the ways of revolution : an Italian confederation is the only solution possible." But it was equally necessary that he should see the Prince Regent of Prussia to persuade him that the Alpine frontier did not also mean the Rhine.

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen

25th June, 1860.

"It is precisely the attitude of the Press on either side of the Rhine," said the Emperor on the 18th, "which has decided me to provoke the interview. I have desired to assure the Sovereigns of Germany, and I think I have succeeded. I told them that unless I was attacked I had no desire to pass my frontiers."

The Emperor then gave me some details about his stay at Baden. He admitted to me that, whilst the country populations had received him well, the students and the middle classes seemed to have a tendency to make a sort of demonstration against him. "So," His Majesty said to me, "a score of young men at Heidelberg put themselves regularly in my way, did not greet me, and even had a threatening air which struck me."

His Majesty afterwards told me that he had met many Austrian officers who seemed to take a pleasure in seeing him and saluting him. "They seemed glad, as though they had met a friend again," added the Emperor, "and I assure you that I was very happy to meet them. They had a charming way about them, an air so open and so full of goodwill that I was touched.

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen

25th June, 1860.

"I do not hesitate to give you the formal assurance," said the Emperor to me, "that if Austria had taken direct part in the war in the East, I should have been obliged in spite of all my well-known sympathies to pocket the Italian question for ever: but your hesitations, above all your incessant hostility, your systematic opposition since the peace, have thrown me little by little into the arms of Piedmont, and have led to this war which you regret, and I regret to-day as much as you, for it has led me to endless embarrassment."

Metternich answered that the Emperor had always been only too ready to listen to Cavour, but the Emperor interrupted him, saying that all that matter was now

over and done with. Metternich then put a frank question about the Emperor's idea of the future. "I don't yet know what you want, and it is no affair of mine," answered Napoleon, "but since you ask me my thoughts as a friend, I shall tell you that Austria must want to increase her influence on one side or the other, that is to say, in Germany or the East. The desire of expansion towards these countries is in my view as natural in the one case as in the other. On the German side, you will find Prussia in your way; on the Eastern, Russia, and from both sides ideas more or less advanced, liberalism and revolution. Nevertheless, if you are tactful and if you begin in Germany on the Prussian side, if you win over Russia by concessions in the East, you will be able to triumph everywhere, and extend in Southern Germany.

"On the Eastern side this is what I would do, I would have Germany and England on my side, I would take up the cause of the Christian religion in the principalities, and instead of alienating Montenegro, I would pay Prince Danilo to make him work for my ends; above all, I would rally Hungary in appealing to her national pride and I would interest the populations on the banks of the Danube in the work of emancipating the Eastern Christians."

These words were said by the Emperor in that inspired tone he assumes when he develops one of his own special ideas.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Cowley

30th June, 1860.

Pray assure the Emperor that I will attend to his wishes in any future discussion about the commercial treaty.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

13th July, 1860.

There was one matter which Walewsky mentioned to me, but it is one of so much delicacy that I must entreat your secrecy upon it. He said that D'Israeli was in constant communication with the Emperor, that he was in the habit of sending Mr. Earle who was formerly attached to this

Embassy and who was, and I believe still is, D'Israeli's private secretary, and that through him an active correspondence was carried on. Walewsky said that he did not understand what D'Israeli's objects were, but that he harped upon the ill will felt by the Queen and the Prince towards the Emperor, and gave it to be understood that the return of his party to power would put an end to it. This led Walewsky to say that the knowledge which the Emperor had of the change of the sentiments of the Queen and the Prince with respect to himself weighed upon his mind more than anything else, and was a source of real grief to him.

Lord Cowley to Sir James Hudson

21st August, 1860.

I had a long talk with the Emperor yesterday who is alarmed at Garibaldi's proceedings and did not speak very favourably of the policy now pursuing at Turin. He declares, however, that he will not interfere either one way or the other. Garibaldi may go on, but if he attacks Venetia and is repulsed, and if Austria follows up her victory, His Majesty will not stop her, provided he does not attempt to remain permanently in Lombardy. I think you will find that this is the course which he will pursue.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

26th August.

(Metternich said that the Emperor had spoken to him in exactly the same terms.)

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

16th September, 1860.

If the Pope is driven from Rome, I, for one, shall not care to criticize the manner in which it is done. The blessing to mankind will overrule everything else in the situation.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Cowley

2nd October, 1860.

Pray assure Thouvenel and assure the Emperor that my great wish, and that of all my colleagues is to maintain the closest relations of friendship and alliance with France . . .

You say there is an idea of recalling Persigny. I should be very sorry if that were to be. I have a very great regard, friendship, and esteem for Persigny. - He is thoroughly honest and honourable man. He is deeply devoted to the Emperor, proud of and sincerely attached to France, but a firm friend to the Alliance between the two countries. His views of great questions are always sound and right . . .

The Emperor and those about him fancy we are making a coalition to attack France, we should be insane to do so . . . All we want is that France should be content with what she is, and should not take up the schemes and policy of the first Napoleon, which many things of late lead us to think she has an inclination to do.

Lord Cowley to Lord Palmerston

12th October, 1860.

The Emperor expressed himself to be in the greatest embarrassment to know what to do in Italy, an embarrassment which he admitted was solely caused by the presence of his troops in Rome. He was, he said, in a scrape with all parties. The Sardinians abused him for being there and preventing their seizing the Italian capital. The Pope was furious because more was not done for him than holding Rome and the immediate neighbourhood. I said that I trusted that nothing would induce His Majesty to do more, and that the best thing which could happen would be that the Pope should leave Rome, which would enable the Emperor to bring his troops away. His Majesty assented to this, but he added that he did not know what to desire.

If the Pope abandoned Rome, it would be said that France was not powerful enough to protect him, when she had promised to do so; if he remained, France would be accused of being the obstacle to Italian liberty. I asked the Emperor what amount of troops he had in Italy. He replied about 15,000 men, and that the more he sent, the worse his position became, but that Garibaldi having, on his entry into Naples, declared his intention of marching upon Rome, it had been absolutely necessary for the honour of the French flag, which might have been compromised, to send large reinforcements.

The Emperor appears to think that the Pope cannot remain—that his means will soon fail him and that he must go elsewhere for a subsistence.

His Majesty blamed the conduct of the Sardinians in marching upon Gaeta, but not in any very strong terms. He said that they had managed the thing ill and that they might have done with a great semblance of justice, but he did not explain his meaning. He said, further, that it had been done in violation of promises made by the King of Sardinia to him. He seemed anxious to know what the Austrians would do, and rather expects that Warsaw will decide the Emperor of Austria to go to the assistance of the Pope and the King of Naples. I said that I did not expect that would be the case unless Austria were to be encouraged by His Majesty ; that neither Austria nor Russia were in a state to go to war, and must needs submit to leave Italy to herself, unless assured that their intervention would not be opposed by France. I said this purposely with a view to drawing some declaration in reply from the Emperor . . .

The Emperor, however, did not bite and I am as wise on that point as I was before. He wishes, I feel certain, to let events run their course in Italy until a congress shall become practicable, but he is evidently sorely puzzled what to do with the Pope.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Cowley

13th October, 1860.

(Palmerston believed that the Emperor was supporting a plot of Olozaga's to dethrone Queen Isabel and annex Portugal.)

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
27th October, 1860.

Whatever the Emperor does and whatever happens, he has the gift of convincing others of his innocence. It is useless to attack him directly, for he knows how to evade the blow and to entrench himself behind his anger against Piedmont, his well-coined phrases in favour of the Pope, and his praises of the King of Naples.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

2nd November, 1860.

Metternich informs me that he has heard from La Guéronniere that the Emperor in pressing for a congress is anxious to prevent the annexation of Naples to Piedmont, and that His Majesty will never consent to it, and that he hopes by the presence of a large French force in Rome to prevent it ; and La Guéronniere says also that the Emperor desires that the Pope should retain Umbria and the Marches, and that the Romagna should be made an independent state with the capital at Bologna.

(In the autumn of 1860, Hübner passing through Paris found the Emperor in a state of the deepest gloom, unable to see any way out of his difficulties.)

Prince Richard Metternich to Baron Hübner

3rd November, 1860.

(Four days later, 3rd November, the Emperor talked to Metternich with the greatest cheerfulness, and assured him that he could come to an understanding with Austria. What he promised was to ask for no extension in Italy, to leave Venetia alone, and to preach no subversive doctrines.¹ But his difficulty was England, which had already taken umbrage at his sending troops to Rome and vessels to Gaeta.)

“The English Alliance,” said His Majesty, “is of vital importance to me, and I will maintain it, in spite of the ill-will of a large faction in England, until the moment when national sentiment prohibits the conciliatory course which I have followed hitherto, though not without considerable cost.”

Metternich and Cowley agree that the Emperor was an opportunist, always keeping as many doors open as possible, so that when events gave him the lead he could pass through whichever he found the most convenient.

¹ Metternich to Rechberg-Rothenlöwen. Telegram. 3rd November, 1860.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

20th November, 1860.

It requires a little time to form an opinion upon the consequences which these new reforms are likely to entail, but if one can at all judge from the language of Paris, they will carry the Emperor further than he thinks or intends.

It is curious the quiet way in which all this has been concocted, and it shows the talent for *conspiracy* which is so remarkable a feature in His Majesty's character.

I am told by an eyewitness that the scene at the Council on Thursday was very comical. Nobody was in the secret of what was coming except Walewsky, who had been informed in the morning, and Thouvenel, who had been told by Walewsky. The Emperor announced that he wished to consult them on some *resolutions* which he had taken, and then developed his plan. The general exclamation from everybody except Walewsky was that it was a Parliamentary Government which the Emperor was instituting, and that if that was intended it would be better to say so candidly.

Almost all the Ministers, again except Walewsky, remonstrated against being defended by deputy, and the Emperor at last with some pique broke up the Council, saying, "*Eh bien ! Messieurs, vous y réfléchirez.*" Of course everybody thought that there would be another Council, but the *Moniteur* of yesterday put an end to their expectations.

The Emperor tells who chooses to hear him that he gave Walewsky the place to get rid of his assiduities to have it—but the truth is that Madame is more powerful and more in favour than ever.

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
9th December, 1860.

Evidently the Emperor wishes to pay me an especial compliment by asking me to hunt alone with him. Our *tête-à-tête* railway journey, which lasted two hours, has convinced me of one fact: that the man has not changed at all, either for the better or for the worse. He is seriously embarrassed by the Italian question, and is planning as usual to leave every door open. He said himself—and I

consider the confession most remarkable—"I am accused of having two distinct policies. It is true ! I am obliged to have two, because my origin forbids me to be reactionary, and I dare not be revolutionary on account of the dangers it would involve. In Piedmont I cannot act on behalf of the Pope or of Austria. I cannot turn my arms against Rome, and I will not turn them against yourselves."

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen

"The Emperor Alexander," said the Emperor Napoleon, "is continually reproaching me for the apparent connivance between the revolutionary sects and myself. He never ceases to insinuate that the only way to put an end to these suspicions is to contract an open and loyal alliance."

(The Emperor had been accused of paying secret agents to stir up revolution in Hungary : he denied the accusation. There was a question afterwards of the liberal movement in Germany. Here and then Metternich summed up his impressions of the Emperor's policy in a telling comparison.)

"It is as if a man showed his friend some beautiful fruit, hanging from a high branch in his garden, but, after pointing out its succulence and perfection, should say to him : ' You would like to taste this fruit, but before I give it to you, you must promise to do something for me. I will not tell you what until the moment comes.' "

It was in this manner, immediately after the Crimean War, that the Emperor flashed before the eyes of Russia the advantages of a French alliance, and afterwards persuaded her to do exactly what he wished by tantalizing her with the still distant object of her desires.

Similarly, during the Crimean War, the Emperor foreshadowed to M. de Cavour the events which have actually happened since, in order to persuade him to send 15,000 men to the Crimea, unconditionally. To some he gives what he has promised, if it is convenient—others he keeps, and possibly will keep them to all eternity, in suspense.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

4th January, 1861.

Nigra "is a supercilious revolutionist and nothing more".

The Emperor to Lord Cowley

Paris, 11th January, 1861.

Many thanks for your kind New Year wishes to the Empress, my son, and myself; I shall always rely with pleasure upon your friendship, and I take the opportunity to assure both you and Lady Cowley of the sincerity of my affection.

I am glad that recent events have enabled me to give the English Government fresh proofs of my desire to march in step with it. This is how I avenge myself for the contentions over Savoy.

I am proud to have supported the English claims which were absolutely just; this enables me to side with you in peace as in war. But from an English point of view, I cannot help regretting the condescension of America. England will never find a more favourable occasion to abase the pride of the Americans or to establish her influence in the New World.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

11th January, 1861.

(In a long interview the Emperor spoke of Prince Napoleon, Italy, the French Clergy, Rome, and Venetia.

Cowley believed that Prince Napoleon had sent secret agents to Poland, Dalmatia, Hungary, and the Principalities. The Emperor admitted that Prince Napoleon was in correspondence with Kossuth and Prince Couza. Prince Napoleon, he said, would see anybody, and often express sympathy, but never worked out anything to a practical result. In Italy his great object was "to induce the Sardinian Government to make any compromise so as to induce the Pope to receive a Sardinian garrison in the place of the French". I said that His Majesty might as well think of jumping over the moon, but he appears to have some scheme in his head, but which he did not divulge, of bringing the Pope and Victor Emmanuel together. . . .")

I questioned the Emperor very closely respecting his own situation with regard to the clergy and public opinion in France. He said that the clergy were hostile to him to a man, and he showed for the first time since I have known him

some anxiety respecting the proceedings of the legitimists in favour of the Pope. He said that it would be a mistake to suppose that the Papal Question would be terminated by the departure of the Pope from Rome. He did not even know that it would not become more complicated. The Pope in a foreign country, surrounded by the French clergy, and the scions of the great legitimist families might produce a very serious reaction in France. At the moment the Clergy were sending the youths destined for the Priesthood from the seminaries to take service with the Pope . . .

I am convinced that his brains are constantly *on the rack* to invent some new plausible excuse for leaving the Pope to his fate.

I observed to the Emperor that the proceedings at Rome and Gaeta made people believe that he was opposed to the unity of Italy, and I asked him to tell me frankly if that was the case. He replied most positively in the negative but he added that he believed that unity to be an impossibility. He knew the Italians well, he said, he had had some experience of their revolutionary doings, and he was quite certain that nothing would ever eradicate from Italy the individuality of the great towns. The cry might be for Unity now, but when Naples, Florence, and other towns came to remember that meant giving up a Court with all its pecuniary and other advantages, the old leaven would break out. At all events, without Rome, Unity was an impossibility. It was for this reason that he had advised a confederation, and not from any abstract sentiment against Unity.

Speaking of Venetia, the Emperor said that it could not be expected that, under present circumstances, Austria should abandon it or consent to sell it. But how, I asked, are her finances to support a constant military occupation of a Province returning nothing ? I do not pretend to say, replied the Emperor, how it will end, but this I know, that nothing can or will be done as long as everybody holds to their extreme opinions. What would be more natural than to arrange a transaction of this nature ? Let Italy purchase Venetia of Austria, and let Austria purchase Bosnia and Herzegovina of the Porte. Austria wants money, and the

Porte wants money. Let Austria keep the half of what she obtains for Venetia and give the other half to the Porte. . . .

The Emperor then spoke about his troops in Syria. He said that he was as anxious to bring them away as we could be to have them gone, but that he was much in the same position in Syria as he was in Rome, and that until some sort of Government was established, he could not leave the Christians to the chances of another massacre.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

1st March, 1861.

I had some very curious conversations with His Majesty about the present state of things in France, and he is not a little put out at the hostile position assumed by both Senate and Legislative Body on the Papal Question. An amendment will be moved in both Chambers in favour of the temporal power of the Pope, but I trust will not be carried. . . .

The Emperor still harps upon his hopes of a direct understanding between Rome and Turin by the cession of the isle of Sardinia to the Pope. I said that such an arrangement would have no chance of lasting. "If it only lasts a year or two," he replied, "that is all that is necessary," meaning that he could bring away his troops from Rome and that he should no longer be responsible for His Holiness's safety or independence. You may depend upon it, and I cannot repeat it too often, that spite of appearances the other way, what the Pope has most at heart is the evacuation of Rome.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

1st April, 1861.

His Majesty is at a complete nonplus as to what to do in Italy, in which case I remarked to him the best line he could take would be to do nothing at all. But the longer the occupation of Rome lasts, the more embarrassing does his situation become. He feels this keenly and racks his brains to find some excuse to justify his abandonment of the tottering tiara. However, in face of the late vote in the Senate and Legislative Chamber he does not dare move,

though he declares that if Sardinia will make propositions which he thinks the Pope ought to accept, he will leave him to his fate if he refuses them. He says that Cavour's speech has done more harm than good as far as France is concerned, for it has the appearance of making France subservient to Sardinia, which the French people are not in a humour to stand. In sum, His Majesty still holds to direct negotiations between Victor Emmanuel and the Pope to settle the Roman question. He seems willing to give Italian unity a fair trial, but at the bottom of his heart he does not believe it will succeed and looks for a federation as the final solution of our present tribulations.

Napoleon who was there was loud in his invectives against the hesitation shown by his Cousin. He says that His Majesty and his Ministers *sont des bêtes* frightened at their own shadows, that they should send an ultimatum to the Pope, which if not accepted should leave him to his fate, and that they would be supported by the mass of intelligence in France. As it is, he looks upon the Italian unity as compromised.

With regard to Poland if I had not been certain before, I should be now, that there is no understanding between France and Russia. The Emperor says that the only time that Poland has ever been mentioned between the two Governments was when he met the Emperor of Russia at Stuttgart, and that he got such a snubbing for his pains that he never repeated the experiment. This beginning led, however, to an exposition of the Emperor's general ideas of passing events, particularly with regard to Poland and Hungary, and they were in the sense of old treaties having done their duty and new ones having become indispensable. He reverted to his old plan of a Congress for the "*remaniement de la Carte de l'Europe*"

I questioned His Majesty a good deal about his home concerns. He admitted freely that the debates in the Senate and the Legislative Body had shown more opposition to him than he had expected, but he said that he did not in the least regret what he had done, and that it was right that the country should know what was going on, and express its opinions

freely. Did he think, I asked, that the Legislative Body represented fairly the opinions of France. He seemed to think not, but that would be seen, he said, at the next election.

The only speech he praised was that of Jules Favre, which shows perhaps more than anything else the bent of his mind.

Lord Cowley to Mr. Hammond

20th May, 1861.

His Majesty said that so much obloquy had been thrown upon him in consequence of what passed at Warsaw, Russia choosing to suppose that he had encouraged the late movements, he had written to the Emperor of Russia upon the subject. France, he had told His Majesty, must always have a strong sympathy for Poland, but there was no truth in the notion that the late insurrection had been the work of the French Government. This sympathy induced him to recommend the Emperor of Russia to act with moderation, and not to visit with severity the late enthusiasts.

I asked the Emperor what I was to say as to his intentions in Italy. He replied, "I can only repeat what I have so often told you before, that I have nothing so much at heart as to withdraw my troops from Rome, when I can do so without loss of honour and without putting myself in contradiction with engagements which I have taken, and assurances which I have given."

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen

30th June, 1861.

"And when all is said and done," I asked the Emperor, "what do you want to do with Italy?"

The Emperor did not want to give me a categorical answer. He said that he had no preconceived plan, that it was a question of circumstances, and of the demands of his particular position in relation to Italy. I was not satisfied with this answer : I came back to the charge, and I told the Emperor that it was hard for me to have to answer always and always : "I know nothing about it," to the questions they asked me from Vienna about this subject. I added that

if he did not want to answer *en bloc*, I would allow myself to put him some particular questions.

"Do you want a united Italy?"

"No."

"Do you want a confederation?"

"Yes."

"Without the Pope?"

"No."

Here the Emperor interrupted my questions and said to me :

"Well, if you want to know what I would like, I would say to you that what would suit me best is an Italy in three parts : a kingdom of Lombardy and Venice with Tuscany and Emilia ; a pontifical state with a lay government, and the kingdom of the two Sicilies : the whole three forming a confederation."

The Emperor then suggested a secret alliance with Austria, that she should be compensated in the East for what she lost in Italy. And then he gave some interesting details about the interview in Stuttgart in 1857.

"When the Emperor of Russia came to Stuttgart, he proposed me an alliance offensive and defensive. I asked him with what object? Is it to arrange together the affairs of Italy, of the East and of Poland? He answered me that for the moment he had no special object in view, but that it was in the interests of the two countries to form an alliance. *He had even made out already the draft of a treaty.* I refused definitely, telling him that I saw no advantage to gain in raising against me England, Austria, and Germany, with nothing to gain from it. To-day," His Majesty said to me, "I am ready to ally myself with Austria if she wishes to define a policy which would both suffice generously to her interests and agree with mine."

The Emperor finished his oration by saying to me that he knew well that his ideas were dreams, and that he would believe me willingly if I told him he was mistaken in thinking that it would be to our interests to make alliance with him for a special object.

The Emperor categorically repudiated the idea of a war over Venetia.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

2nd July, 1861.

The Emperor "does not think that the Pope's life is worth a year's purchase". He was, however, less sanguine of being able to come to terms with whoever might be His Holiness's successor than I had expected. I had been told that His Majesty was desirous of seeing his cousin (there is a Bonaparte Cardinal) elected, and I asked the Emperor if this was so, but he assured me of the contrary, observing that his cousin was a greater Ultramontane than the present Pope, "*quoique du reste un brave homme.*" . . . Although the Emperor's language was satisfactory as regarded Italy, I doubt his having recognized the Italian Kingdom to please the Italians, but rather that he feared that if he did not do something to satisfy the party of the Union after Cavour's death Mazzini would get the upper hand.

With regard to American affairs, there certainly is no sympathy in the Emperor's mind for the north. On the contrary, he said he conceived that the interests of France, and still more those of England should counsel them to take part with the South, and that for his part if it were possible he should be quite ready to assist them. I said that would be a very unwise step, at all events at the present moment—that the two Governments should confine themselves to a strict neutrality and leave the Northern and Southern States to settle their own quarrel unless, indeed, either party were to commit aggressive acts. The Emperor replied that he had rather conveyed to me his own thoughts than that he had expressed a political opinion, but that he could not forget the overbearing insolence of the United States Government in its days of prosperity and hoped that they might receive a lesson. . . .

I asked His Majesty how he was satisfied with the state of affairs in France. He replied that they were going on pretty well—that the Clergy had done their worst and had been beaten—that he had seen a letter from their Coryphic, Montalembert, admitting this—that all their strength had been put forward at the late municipal elections with very little success—that they had no influence with the people,

"but at the same time," said the Emperor, "France is not in a satisfactory state. There is nothing between me and the masses. The people have confidence in no one, but for the moment in me. Take my word for it—there are but two principles which have a chance in France—Napoleon III or a republic."

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
17th August, 1861.

The Emperor said to me at St. Cloud :—

"There is one thing which in spite of appearances I have never doubted : that is that Russia does not desire the union of the Principalities. Russia showed a consummate cleverness during the Congress of Paris. They said to themselves that they would have to make sacrifices to please me. They seemed enthusiastically to share my ideas about the union, and they went so far as to feign liberalism, knowing well that it would be dangerous to them, but thinking, on the other hand, they could win my sympathies, and public opinion in France by their liberal policy in the East. They succeeded up to a certain point, but they were obliged to stop short before impossibilities.

His Majesty gave me certain details on the way the wheels turned in the Government of Turin. He depicted its weakness and its vices with a master hand, and concluded with this memorable phrase : "The Governments and causes which place themselves in tow to the changing opinion of the day instead of diminishing it are the Governments and causes which pass away."

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
22nd November, 1861.

The Emperor spoke to me of the Italian question in a wearied and discouraged tone. He said that there was nothing to do but stay quiet and see what time would do. He repeated to me that he did not believe that it [Italy] could again become an apple of discord between us, and that the relations between Austria and France were such that one could not fear a misunderstanding in view of the decision

[taken] and the common desire to concentrate on the steps to take.

The Emperor has sympathies which are rather suspect for the Montenegrins.

Lord Cowley to Lord John Russell

9th December, 1861.

I heard an odd story the other day—that the Emperor's interest in Mexican affairs, which has always been very remarkable, arises from a promise which he made the Empress before he married her, that he would endeavour to do something for that unfortunate country. It seems that she has very romantic notions about it. . . . I find now that the expedition is *very much* disapproved by the whole of the Government.

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Russell¹*

10th January, 1862.

MEMORANDUM

"Her Majesty's Government appear to have received information which leads them to apprehend that the Emperor intends to go to war in the Spring on a great scale, with the view, on the one hand, of forcing Austria to abandon Venetia, Italy aiding; and on the other of taking possession of the frontier of the Rhine. My opinion is asked as to the probability of this danger.

"As I do not know the facts upon which these apprehensions are grounded, my opinion must be guided by what I see and hear around me, and by such information as I can obtain directly or indirectly from officials or more confidential sources.

"With such knowledge, then, as I possess, I have no hesitation in expressing the conviction that His Majesty does not contemplate war at present, if at all. I am certain that such also is the conviction of all those, his Ministers and others, who are most likely to know his mind.

"First as to Italy. That the Emperor distrusts Austria, that he feels that were Italy to make an aggressive move on Venetia and be worsted France might be obliged to take part in the war in defence of the Treaty of Zürich and to

¹ See note, p. 209.

prevent the subjugation of Italy, admits of no doubt, but that he is prepared to undertake the conquest of Venetia, or would counsel Italy to make the attempt, I do not believe.

" My reasons are the following. A war undertaken for such a purpose would be most distasteful to France and what is more to the French army. Brilliant as was the campaign of 1859 for the French arms, it is well known, and nobody is more aware of it than the Emperor, that the French army on two occasions escaped disaster almost by a miracle. Why should he tempt fortune again when there is no real necessity for it? He could not march upon Venetia with less than 200,000 men, and to keep this army to its standard he must have 100,000 men more ready to supply its losses. It will be said that Italy would furnish a large contingent to this army. I will revert to this point presently.

" But war cannot be carried on without money and where is the money that would be required for such a gigantic expedition to come from? There is certainly none in hand. It must be raised, therefore, by loan or by increased taxation. The latter cannot be had recourse to. The former is alone available.

" I have little doubt, knowing the pliability of the French character, that if the Emperor were to ask the Legislative Body to sanction a loan he would not meet with a refusal, but I am certain that the Nation at large would not like it and that the Emperor's position in France would suffer in proportion. It is true that a successful war, if accompanied by acquisition of territory, would again turn the popular tide in his favour, still I cannot believe, until I see it, that he will deliberately ask the consent of the Legislative Body for a loan to be employed on an aggressive attack on Venetia. The risk would be too great, particularly in the present state of the French finances, when everyone is convinced, except the Minister of Finance, that a loan must shortly be made to cover past deficits. I say nothing of the large speculations entered into by France abroad which would at the very suspicion of war be blown to the winds.

" But it may be said that Italy will furnish the greater

part, or at least half, of the army to be employed and that she will be made to bear the whole expenses of a war undertaken for her advantage. I would remark, in the first place, that they know little of the character of the Emperor or of the French army who suppose that anything like parity of forces would be permitted. If Venetia is to be obtained by a combined force, of which France is to furnish a part, that force must be so comprised as to secure to France the supreme command and the chief glory in the result. But there is another and more powerful reason why the Emperor must take care, as far as human foresight can go, to insure success by his own means alone. Rightly or wrongly, neither he nor any of his Generals have any opinion of the Italian army. They believe it to be completely disorganized and not at this moment to be in a condition to produce more than 25,000 efficient troops. Again, where is Italy to find money for such a war? She has already made a loan for 500 millions of francs, the success of which is still an uncertainty, and she has a deficit this year of 300 million more. It may be urged, indeed, that if the finances of France and Italy are in a bad state, those of Austria are in a worse, but Austria cannot help herself. Until she makes up her mind to abandon Venetia she must bear the expenses of keeping it as best she may. While with regard to France and Italy, and particularly with respect to the former, it cannot be said that there is such necessity for attacking Austria as would justify the imposition of heavy burdens upon the two countries.

"I turn now to Germany and the Rhine. Of course, a war undertaken by France against Germany on the Rhine would require as large an army and would entail as great expenditure, or nearly so, as a campaign against Austria in Italy, but the armies to be encountered would be very different. Venetia would not be won without a bloody and desperate struggle. To take possession of the Rhine would, I apprehend, be little more than a military promenade. The Emperor must know this, and if there is latent in his mind the intention to recover for France the frontier of the Rhine there could not be a more favourable moment than the present, Austria and Russia being paralysed, Prussia undergoing a military

reorganization, and jealousies of all sorts dividing the German Courts.

" Does, then, this latent intention exist ?

" It would be more than puerile to attempt to argue that the Emperor must not be desirous of associating his name with the restitution of what the French are pleased to call the natural limits of France, but it is a curious fact that I have never heard the Emperor or any Frenchman with whom I am acquainted allude to that restitution by means of war. I have heard of the peaceful *remanement* of the Map of Europe by which the Treaties of 1815 might be modified, but war undertaken for the express purpose of recovering the frontier of the Rhine does not seem to me to have been ever seriously contemplated.

" There are many who think that the Emperor's policy is governed by a fixed plan—that he assumed the Throne with fixed ideas and that all he had since done has been in furtherance of them. Thus I have heard it said that his plan was to reduce Europe to subjection by degrees—that he began with Russia, that he followed up with Austria, that his next step will be Germany, and that having subdued the Continent he will try his strength with England. I do not believe the Emperor to have any fixed policy at all. He has certain ideas and desires floating in his mind which turn up as circumstances seem favourable, but a man of less decision of character, of more indolent disposition, or more inclined to wait upon events, instead of creating them, I never came across. Her Majesty's Government will recollect the difficulty they experienced in first inducing him to send a few thousand men to Gallipoli. Would this have been so had he meditated the downfall of Russia ? All must remember the uncertainty and hesitation and irresolution which preceded the Italian campaign and which were alone put an end to by the insanity of Austria declaring war on Sardinia. Would this have been so had the destruction of Austria been part of a fixed plan, and would not a pretext for attacking Germany have been found before this, were Germany doomed in the Imperial mind ?

" There are yet other reasons which would make me

hesitate before I accept the conclusion that war is determined upon. Both the Crimean and Italian wars were preceded by warlike rumours. War, if I may so express myself, was in the air. Nothing of the kind exists now. France is quiet and wishes for repose. The Army is satisfied and does not require active service. The finances, to say the least, demand time for their readjustment.

" When I consider these things and look at the Emperor's time of life and his somewhat impaired health, when I think that it must be his desire to leave to his son an Empire that Europe would not be inclined to dispute, when I know his avowed horror of war since he has seen it in detail, I cannot bring myself to believe that he will lightly and without provocation risk the stability of his dynasty and the prosperity of France by commencing a war of aggression the end of which, though it might be successful for France, in the commencement, no man can foresee.

" I have reserved one point to the last as being of paramount importance. I am convinced that the Emperor, so long as he is master of his own position, will engage in no war which he thinks will bring Great Britain into the field against him. Her Majesty's Government may be assured that this will turn the scale whenever peace or war under ordinary circumstances is before him. If, then, he would not otherwise shrink from a forcible acquisition of the Rhenish Frontier, the uncertainty whether England would consider it or not to be a *casus belli* would make him pause. At all events, he would be glad to see us occupied elsewhere were he meditating a conquest which he knows, to say the least of it, we should not approve. Is it likely that under such circumstances he would, unsolicited by us, have given advice to the United States calculated to prevent war with England when his policy would rather have been to embroil us at a distance from home in the other hemisphere?

" It will naturally be asked why, if the Emperor means peace, he keeps up such exaggerated military and naval establishments to the alarm of Europe and to the detriment of French Finances. It is very difficult to give a satisfactory answer to this question, particularly to such as do not know the peculiarities of the Emperor's character and the general

temper of the French nation. There is one paramount notion in the Emperor's mind—that the Bourbon and Orleans Dynasties were both lost through their having allowed France to drop in the scale of Nations. I do not stop to inquire how far this idea is well founded. Suffice it to say that it is the unalterable belief of the Emperor and that he is determined to maintain the position of France as a first-rate Power. He thinks, how erroneously need not be pointed out, that to insure her being respected she must have an Army able to compete with Europe combined. Nothing, I am persuaded, will drive this chimera out of his head. Perhaps also there is an unavowed feeling that his own strength lies in the Army, and that by reducing it he will throw a number of discontented officers without employment upon the country. France, on the other hand, loses sight of the expenses of her armaments in the glory of having so irresistible a force.

"With the Navy the case is different. There, jealousy of England comes into play, and I believe that the Nation would sooner see its Military than its Naval establishment reduced.

"No doubt there always must be danger to others when a country is armed beyond its immediate necessities, as is the case with France.

"The Army may become discontented and require more active employment. But there are certainly no signs of this at the present moment. While, then, I hold the opinion that war is not now desired, and will not be provoked from hence, I am not blind to all the chances which may produce one. A desperate effort by Garibaldi, a false move on the part of Austria, might bring on a collision in Italy into the vortex of which France might soon be drawn. The Emperor's position might be so shaken in France that he might resort to a campaign on the Rhine to restore his popularity. These contingencies are on the cards, but, I repeat, I see no signs of any warlike movements now.

"I have thought it necessary in taking the responsibility of stating this opinion to accompany it by the reasons on which it is founded and in conclusion I can only express the hope that I may neither be deceived myself nor be deceiving others."

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

11th February, 1862.

I understand that if Thouvenel's overture had found favour at Turin he would have proposed that Rome should be made a free town, that *with a garden* it should be the residence of the Pope, who should be allowed to keep up all the attributes of a Sovereign and have certain estates assigned to him to meet his expenses. The rest of Italy to go to Victor Emmanuel. . . .

There was a large dinner at the Tuileries the other day for the new Nuncio to which all the Cardinals were invited to do him honour. After dinner the Emperor went up to him and, after inquiring what news he had from Rome, said:—

"I have an idea in my head. I hardly know whether it is practicable or not. I only throw it out as a notion which crosses me. Suppose the Pope were to leave Rome, just to show the world the impossibility of Italian unity!"

The poor Nuncio, who did not know whether the Emperor was laughing at him or not, looked so flabbergasted that the Emperor continued quickly:—

"Don't be alarmed, it is only an idea which has crossed me. Be assured that I will do anything in my power to meet the Pope's wishes."

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

10th March, 1862.

I have not mentioned in my despatch the few words which the Emperor has let fall respecting the internal state of France. It would be too much to say that he is uneasy about it, or that he has reason to be so, but he evidently regrets having given any liberty of speech to the Senate and the Legislative Body, which does but create excitement without producing any good results. There has been some very strong language used in the Legislative Body by the half-dozzen Republicans, who are by far the most talented men in the Assembly, to which Morny has given unnecessary relief by his protesting against it. He is very much blamed for his conduct. He is no match for such men as Jules Favre or Ollivier, whose whole object is to provoke him.

V

THE IDEA OF A CONGRESS
AND
THE CRISIS OF SADOWA

THE crisis of Sadowa did not occur until after political negotiations which had proved highly complicated and fatal to France. The Emperor had always had an infinite mistrust of the United States ; he wanted to join England in helping the Southern States during the Civil War, and he took advantage of this war to fling Bazaine's expedition into Mexico. At the same time his passionate eagerness for the liberation of Poland revived, and served to alienate the Czar's sympathy from him. In the following correspondence, already more scanty, Lord Cowley reveals how the plots of the Imperial conspirator were becoming more and more complicated.

In the opinion of M. Pierre de la Gorce, it was over the war between Denmark and Prussia, which was already ruled by Bismarck, that Napoleon III committed his capital error. We read here how and why he decided to do nothing in this matter. We see also his impression of Bismarck and why he gave the fatal indications which set Bismarck free to attack Austria. At the moment of the Prussian victory the Emperor once more opens to the English Ambassador his whole mind and intentions. It was Lord Cowley who read the Emperor's thoughts when confronted by the crisis which changed the history of Europe up to our own day.

From the battle of Sadowa it is only a short step to the Luxembourg incident.

After Sadowa the English Ambassador confines himself to the statement that, in view of the Prussian character, the war of 1870—and we may add the war of 1914—was in his judgment inevitable. The tension between Prussia and France, the resentment of the French, and the Machiavellianism of Bismarck became every day more distinct.

THE CONGRESS

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
14th March, 1862.

His Majesty made it clear that a thousand questions were awaiting radical and complete solutions, and went so far (it is rather curious!) as to praise the treaties of 1815, and the good result of them during the years of peace.

The Emperor spoke to me again of the idea which he admitted himself he had put a hundred times in front of me; an idea which could hardly be realized in his view if everyone did not put his goodwill into it. This old idea of a Congress of Sovereigns, when each monarch would be invited to express frankly his wishes, his refusal, his complaints, and in fact everything which he had on his mind. Such an assembly, according to the Emperor, ought to arrive at a result comparable to the Congress of Vienna, and to have taken the initiative would do honour—to be thought—to the Sovereign or the statesman whose courage was at the height of his talents.

(Metternich pointed out that whereas in 1815 all the Sovereigns were agreed on what they wanted, their fundamental principles in the sixties, as well as their immediate demands, would be very hard to bring into harmony.

The Emperor agreed with this, but insisted, nevertheless, that in the confusion in which everybody was, and he himself perhaps more than the other—it was to satisfy a request of clearing the ground that he brought forward the question again.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell¹

4th April, 1862.

The Emperor is very much up about Mexico, the Empress still more so.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

30th April, 1862.

Great is the despair in the harem of the Tuilleries. . . . The Empress would not appear at a Ball for the Queen of Holland on Monday night, and was reported very sulky all day yesterday.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

13th May, 1862.

I had some conversation yesterday with the Emperor on Mexican matters.

With regard to the former His Majesty said that he regretted M. Mercier's visit to the South, which he considered to have been a great mistake. As His Majesty had heard nothing of the results of that visit I told him the substance of Lyons' letters to you, and he said that he was quite agreed in the opinion that nothing was to be done for the moment but to watch events. He agreed also in the necessity of England and France acting as one man.

With respect to Mexico, His Majesty was free in his abuse of Prim, and of the manner in which the Spanish expedition had been conducted in general. With their own resources so near to them, the Spaniards ought never to have landed without every preparation having been previously made for a march into the interior. He agreed that the presence of Almonte with the French troops was a mistake, and said that he would have been sent back had not so insolent a demand been made for his surrender. He stated that all the private accounts which he received from the City of Mexico represented the desire for a monarchy, but he made no mention of the Archduke.

(Lord Cowley answered that a monarchy proclaimed in the City could not count on the support of savage tribes

¹ Lord John Russell was gazetted an Earl on 30th July, 1861.

under rival chiefs, to whose disorders the upper classes in Mexico City wanted to put an end.)

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

20th May, 1862.

The French are greatly put out at the approval of Prim by the Spanish Government. The Emperor spoke to me yesterday with great irritation over it. His Majesty admits that we have acted with perfect loyalty but he puts all the difficulties which have arisen upon the Spaniards who, he says, arrived at Vera Cruz prematurely and without proper preparations for advancing although they must have known that they could not remain at Vera Cruz. His Majesty seems confident of the success of the Maximilian scheme, and says that his reports from Mexico are most reassuring. I asked him if he was going to send reinforcements, and he said : "Certainly not at present or during the sickly season."

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

27th May, 1862.

The Emperor spoke to me last night at the Tuileries with great irritation on the subject of Mexico. This irritation was chiefly vented against the proceedings of Prim and of the Spanish Government, which he characterized in no very courteous terms, but he said he trusted we were not going to make common cause with Spain against France.

I replied that there was no question of making common cause, but that it had so happened that the British and Spanish Commissioners in Mexico had taken similar views of the proceedings of the French Commissioner, and so common action on their part had of necessity followed. His Majesty must not confound the distinct questions, that of the military operations and that of the diplomatic proceedings. With regard to the first we had decided from the first that we could furnish no force to march into the interior, and accordingly the small number of marines landed on the arrival of a British Squadron before Vera Cruz had, as soon as the unhealthy season had set in, been withdrawn. . . .

The Emperor said that Prim had withdrawn because he had

been thwarted in his own plans, which had been to put a Spanish Prince on the throne of Mexico (you will recollect that Thouvenel had always attributed still more ambitious views to him), that the Spanish Government was afraid of Prim and of the opposition, and had therefore approved him though they had not intended to do so at first. The Emperor then asked whether all our ships had not left Vera Cruz, observing that people would never believe that there was the same good understanding there had been between France and England.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

3rd October, 1862.

We are approaching a very critical moment in the Roman Question. The Emperor will seize upon any excuse or pretext to remain in Rome, not, I am still willing to think, because it is his purpose to remain, but because he dreads the family discord and the effect upon public opinion which his withdrawal may occasion. I have had a very long conversation with Fould upon the subject, and he is hot from Biarritz. He represents the Emperor, though looking to eventual evacuation, as determined not to be hurried. He will proceed, says Fould, *par étages plus ou moins longues*. He will exhaust every effort at conciliation, in order to show the world that he has done his best to save the Pope ; but he is excessively irritated at the attitude taken both by Italy and England, who, he thinks, want him to cut dishonourably and care not for the consequences to him. He considers himself to be unfairly treated in England, and is angry with Flahault for not pleading his cause better. He declares that his *amour propre* will prevent his ceding either to threats of assassination from Italy or to dictation from the Governments of England and Italy. "If," said Fould, "Rome is to be evacuated, and we shall arrive at it by degrees, it must be done by degrees, through appeals to the Emperor's sense of justice, and not by irritating him. Nothing irritates him so much as being told that Rome by right belongs to Italy. He never will be a party to recognizing the rights of a Government of eight days to what has existed in another form for as many centuries. If

Rome is to be evacuated it must be without prejudice to the Pope's position." . . .

Fould does not give so satisfactory an account of the Emperor's intentions with regard to Mexico as Thouvenel does. His Majesty has evidently a hankering after the mines of Sonora, and he is encouraged in these foolish chimeras by a number of Mexican adventurers, who tell him wonders of that kind. One of them, by name Hidalgo, whose name you may have seen in newspaper articles, is actually installed in the Palace at Biarritz with full means of constantly distilling the poison into the Imperial ears of both sexes. . . .

The Emperor, Fould says, is much preoccupied over the American crisis, and very anxious to recognize the South, though determined to take no step without us. I told Fould that it had come to my knowledge, which it has, that the Emperor had in his conversation with some Southern travellers laid on us the blame of his non-recognition.

Lord Cowley to Lord Rustell

5th December, 1862.

I congratulate you on getting rid of Romanovsky. The Empress is not pleased—she now mixes herself up in every political question that arises.

I will endeavour to see Drouyn to-morrow and speak to him of the candidates [for the throne of Greece]. Ferdinand of Portugal would suit the Emperor best, but you can't find him a wife as well as a throne.

Lord Cowley to Lord Rustell

7th December, 1862.

I took an opportunity of mentioning to the Emperor in the course of Friday evening that you desired to know whether His Majesty had any candidate or candidates in view, giving him at the same time the names of those from which you thought a selection might be made. The Emperor replied that Prince Henry of the Netherlands would not accept the Crown of Greece were it to be offered to him, and that His Majesty had no doubt in his own mind that King Ferdinand of Portugal was the best choice. . . .

The Emperor in talking to Rothschild the other day of his political alliances said : " *Je regarde l'Angleterre comme ma femme, les autres comme des maîtresses.*"

Lord Cowley to Mr. Odo Russell

4th January, 1863.

We are now beginning to speculate on the Emperor's speech. I fear that it will not be satisfactory as to Italy. There was a story about Paris that it was a sudden letch for the Empress when His Majesty was with her at Biarritz which brought about the late Italian and ministerial crisis. The Empress was coy and refused to have anything to say to anyone so inimical to the Pope. The Emperor was then called in to negotiate, and the price paid for a renewal of marital rights was Thouvenel's dismissal and La Valette's recall.

Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen

8th January, 1863.

Although the last news from Constantinople seems less grave, the situation, as far as the East is concerned and the manner in which it is viewed here, has not become less delicate. Fortunately things are being taken quietly by the Emperor, who really seems to want to be held by his new Minister to a way relatively correct. To ask the Emperor to give up his inveterate antipathy to the Ottoman Government ; to demand that he should refuse the support of his sympathy and convictions to the Christian princes and populations who invoke his protection, that would be to ask the impossible.

I admit that I am well satisfied and rather astonished to see him resist the Russian insinuations ; but, on the other hand, I cannot but take cognizance of the constant growth of deep repugnance to anything that would mean encouragement and reinforcement of the Ottoman power in Europe.

Several little expressions of feeling I have noticed will give a more precise idea of the Emperor's actual state of mind.

His Majesty last spoke to me of the news from Constantinople and said that it struck him as very bad. The Emperor added that it was very regrettable to have to assist at the anomalies

which were produced in Europe by the existence of a power so little civilized, and by a monarchy at the head of which stood a Sovereign lost in debauchery, half-mad, and whose most noticeable action had been to give his dentist the rank of General-in-Chief.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

27th January, 1863.

The Emperor seemed very uneasy last night at the doings of Poland. He said that he had known for some time that Mazzini and the Poles were combining some general plan of operations and that London and Paris had been the chief seats of the conspiracy. A correspondence of considerable importance has, if I understand His Majesty rightly, been seized here.

I paid the Emperor some compliments on his speech, and I wish that you would do the same. I hear that it was very well received, and certainly the general tone in speaking of it is very satisfactory. His Majesty chuckled over his invasion and said that he had played the Empress a pretty trick. He had not shown her the speech before going into the *salle* where it was spoken, and going up the steps of the throne he said to her :—

“ *Ne vous en effrayez pas ; mais je vais dire quelques mots sur une invasion de l'Angleterre.* ”

“ *Mais qu'est-ce qu'il y a donc !* ” she exclaimed.

There was no time for explanation until the speech explained itself. The Emperor told this with high relish.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

20th February, 1863.

I saw Mr. Thomas Baring this morning, who told me that he had seen the Emperor yesterday, who wants him to take a share in the Commercial Company which His Majesty wants to form for undertaking works in Madagascar. Mr. Baring will call upon you and tell you what passed between him and the Emperor upon this matter. It seems that the object now is merely to find some engineer to explore and report. The Emperor spoke to him further on Mexico and of his views there. Here also His Majesty wants to form

a commercial company to develop the resources of Mexico, and so satisfy the claims of the various Governments.

Baring will tell you how the Emperor hopes to bring away his regiments, one by one, as fast as native regiments can be found to replace them ; these latter to be officered by Frenchmen.

Prince Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen

26th February, 1863.

The Emperor spoke to me the day before yesterday, and at great length, of the question of the day. I have for some time been prepared for the overtures which His Majesty was accustomed to make : but I confess that the rush of his frankness has surpassed my expectations. His language recalls the great epochs of his reign, the epochs which preceded the war in the East and Italy. His words were instinct with political passion and are all the more remarkable because they are an absolute contrast to his habitual attitude. In these moments one sees emerging the unbounded ambition and indomitable energy of the extraordinary man.

The Emperor began in weak notes and mounted to the grand diapason only gradually. He said to me that our policy had been the cleverest possible for three years, that this policy contrasted in such a way with the false moves made around us that we should necessarily gather great advantage from it ; that, for his part, he asked nothing better than to prove to us the truth of what he had so often repeated, to wit that circumstances alone, and the safeguarding of mutual interests could lead to fruitful alliance. "The day has come," added His Majesty, "when Austria with one turn of the hand can regain much more than she has lost. What sacrifices she will be willing to make will be generously compensated, and as for me I am ready to bind myself to Your Emperor body and soul."

The Emperor then entered into very precise details of what he expected from us, and he did this with great cleverness, covering his whole argument with a veil of conservatism. Dynastic and anti-revolutionary ideas were enunciated by His Majesty with great force and energy ; and I admit

that if it is a little tiresome for us to be pushed on in this way, we cannot but applaud the spectacle of the great master of revolution soliciting the favour of an alliance with us in the attitude of rightly conditioned and well-principled statesman. That, he said, is why he wanted to put England between us a little. The marriage of convenience which binds together the two Western Powers in all the questions which arise does not prevent a close and passionate liaison between the two greatest States of the Continent.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

1st March, 1863.

Metternich asked the Empress what the Emperor expected to get from Russia.

"A Poland all but independent under a Grand Duke," she answered.

"And what do you mean to give in return?" asked Metternich.

"*Nous serons très larges sur toutes les questions qui regardent l'Orient.*"

"Well," said Metternich, "You had better try it if that suits you."

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

10th April, 1863.

I had some conversation with the Emperor yesterday on giving him the Queen's and Prince of Wales's letters *in re* The Legion of Honour. He seems to have very wild ideas about Poland. He said that anyone could foresee what would be the answer of the Russian Government to the three notes. It would leave matters just where they are—and *après*? I said that I certainly did not suppose we should obtain much satisfaction from Russia, but that a point had been gained in inducing the Austrian Government to put itself to a certain extent on the same lines with ourselves. His Majesty replied that that was true but that he did not expect much more co-operation from Austria. The Emperor of Austria had written him a letter full of *phrases banales* meaning in reality nothing. He had, however, replied to him in firm language (His Majesty did not tell me more as to the nature

of the language). But the question was what was to be done for Poland. A Continental war was impossible. The only vulnerable point of Russia was in the Baltic. He sometimes asked himself whether it might not be possible to take possession of some place or island and tell Russia that we would keep it until she had restored complete independence to Poland. I observed that this would be an act of war. . . .

I should hardly have troubled you with repetitions of such nonsense, did it not show the troubled state of the Emperor's mind, and that therefore he requires watching.

Another subject on which His Majesty spoke to me was America. Adverting to the somewhat ticklish state of our—i.e. England's—relations with the Washington Government, he said that, as there was so much danger of a rupture, he wondered that Her Majesty's Government did not secure the goodwill of the South by recognizing their independence. I said that such a recognition, were it open to no objection in itself, would lead to no result unless we were prepared to go further and help the South to complete independence. The fact is that the Emperor is a perfect child in international law.

* *Report of Prince Henry VII, Reuss, on an Interview with the Emperor Napoleon III*

Fontainebleau, 8th June, 1863.

After dinner the Emperor came to me and engaged me in a long conversation. After many anxious inquiries after His Majesty the King, he asked me whether I was again settled in Paris and how long I expected to stay there. Afterwards he referred to recent Prussian events, and said that he had been much impressed by the address of the Berlin Magistracy, which apparently would be repeated in the other large towns. He was fully acquainted with its contents and, when I replied that such demonstrations were by no means so important as the democratic Press professes—both at home and abroad—he answered that he could easily believe that they did not imperil the Government. Nevertheless, these demonstrations made a considerable impression abroad which must inevitably damage Prussia's influence, because

everyone is persuaded that the conflict between the Crown and the country is weakening Prussia's power. The case was precisely similar to the Paris elections. With regard to home affairs they were a matter of complete indifference to him—he said this in a tone of scathing contempt—but they were important on account of the impression they make abroad. For if Paris alone condemned the government by some 150,000 votes, naturally other countries would imply that its popularity had waned, and French influence would inevitably suffer.

The Emperor continued that Prussian influence and importance originated largely from the fact that she was regarded in Europe as the bearer and representative of German nationality and Liberal ideas. It was this that had given her supremacy in Germany, and it was because other countries recognized that Prussia had the whole nation behind her that she exercised such a powerful influence. Obviously the position had been an extremely comfortable one for Prussia, which had had absolutely nothing to do, except to maintain and encourage this opinion. He regretted the change which these new developments would necessitate, because he had always taken a friendly interest in Prussia for her King's sake ("her King whom I love dearly").

I tried to explain to the Emperor that he was seriously mistaken if he imagined that Prussia's strength was weakened by last month's incidents. I represented in glowing colours the prosperous conditions of finance, trade, enterprise, etc. I described the changed reception now accorded to the deputies, and I insisted that certainly this did not point to the desperate plight in which France seemed to believe, and that the Prussian nation still had greater confidence in a firm and strong government than in agitating speeches or the Press. Incidentally I remarked that the deputies had absolutely ruined themselves by their espousal of the Polish cause and the treasonable speeches in which they had referred to it. The majority of the people take very little interest in foreign politics and Poland is the one question on which it holds a positive opinion; and here hatred of Poland is predominant. Consequently the attitude of the deputies

has given serious offence. The Government's actions have been dictated by circumstances, and have been carried out in the interests of order and of other monarchical states. I asked the Emperor to judge for himself whether it could have acted otherwise.

The Emperor had listened to me attentively ; especially when I mentioned the attitude of the Chambers towards Polish affairs. In reply to my last remark he agreed that of course the Government had to do something ; but if he had been in the King's place he would have addressed the country last year, when the question of the constitution of the army became acute, and would have taken for his text Arndt's words : "*Das Vaterland muss grosser sein*" (he said it in German). " Give me a strong army and I will give you a strong Fatherland ! " Then he could have advanced steadily ; secure in the support of the country and of the whole German Liberal and National Party. Of course, it would have been difficult to harmonize this procedure with the treaties, but it was not impossible. And when the object was accomplished the instruments—that is to say, the democracy—could easily have been laid aside. Instead of this Prussian policy wavered ; it failed to steer a straight course. " I warned M. de Bismarck last year that in politics you will effect nothing, unless you have a definite end in view."

Afterwards the Emperor observed : " Polish affairs are most unpleasant, and I do not know how they are going to end." I replied that, if he would allow me to speak frankly, I must admit that I failed to understand why, at the cost of alienating his friends, he had sided with Poland so definitely ; although France was not practically interested, and he stood to gain nothing by it. That French enthusiasm for the Poles was nothing like so great as had been claimed was proved by the recent election speeches, which practically ignored Poland while they harped continuously on peace.

The Emperor answered that I was quite right and that made the matter all the more disagreeable. He had been most reluctant to relinquish his friendship with Russia. As to the reasons of his Polish policy he would explain them briefly.

In his opinion Louis Philippe's reign was the worst France had ever endured. It completely ruined her importance and her interest. Consequently since his accession he had set himself the task of acting differently from his predecessor on the throne of France. Louis Philippe had always feigned the utmost sympathy for Poland, but had done nothing whatever to help it. The celebrated saying of Sebastiani, "Order reigns at Warsaw," had been one of the biggest errors of his reign. His conduct had the result that Poland aroused French sympathy, and clung to its belief in French assistance. It would have been far better if he had said plainly that he could do nothing for Poland. The matter would have been dead once for all, and certainly that would have suited his own convenience best. Now, however, the case was different. He had found sympathy with Poland already established in France, and it had been impossible for him to ignore it completely. So, rather than tread in the footsteps of Louis Philippe, he had been obliged to take a side, and that necessarily at the expense of his friendship with Russia. He had foreseen this and, in the hope of avoiding it, he had told the Emperor Alexander at Stuttgart that the only question which might disturb their friendly relations was Poland. He entreated him, therefore, to do something which would pacify public opinion in Europe and relieve him (the Emperor Napoleon) of the need to trouble any further about Poland. At that time the Emperor Alexander could have acted easily ; since the word Poland had not been mentioned, and he (Napoleon) was most careful to avoid it. Consequently anything that Russia did would have been done, not under pressure, but of her own free will. To a certain extent the Emperor Alexander followed Napoleon's advice and did a great deal for Poland ; but he did it unskilfully. " If he had taken a sheet of paper, if he had issued a manifesto, containing nothing more than what he gave subsequently—the lieutenancy to his brother, the Council of State, Polish employment, liberty of worship, etc.—this would have produced an enormous effect and all Europe would have applauded. Another important aspect of the matter is that if, as is more than likely, the Poles had proved discontented

and asked for more, no one would have sympathized with them. For in politics it is always essential to obey the maxim that it is not necessary only to *be* but to *appear*. You will understand that if the Emperor Alexander had acted in this manner, in which case I should have made peace with him, I should not have dreamed of starting afresh, however dissatisfied the Poles might have chosen to be."

As regards French sympathy, the Emperor was well aware that, though everyone desired Polish independence, no one was prepared to go to war about it.

I suggested that this was a very cheap form of sympathy, to which he had little to answer. Then I inquired exactly what it was that he wanted Russia to do.

The Emperor answered that there was only one solution of the problem: to declare Poland independent. He had told the Russians that they could arrange this as best it suited them; since surely they must prefer to grant independence, which need be only apparent, than to retain a centre of incessant revolution and anarchy within their borders. It was of no use for the Emperor to bestow freedom. That would be a mere repetition of Venice. So long as that province wished to remain Austrian the Emperor and Schmerling were prepared to grant it freedom. But why? There, as in Poland, the nation would use freedom only as a means to gain independence. It should be so arranged that countries are declared independent but without freedom. To my question how he proposed to carry out this plan in Poland he replied: "Poland must solemnly be declared an independent kingdom within its present borders; with the Grand Prince Constantine as king, under the protection of Russia; with a Constitution, granting all possible liberty but with its popular representation carefully restricted in order to avoid encroachments. Pending the establishment of a Polish army the Russian army would remain in occupation. The Polish army would be trained by Russian officers, and so on. By these means Russia would retain an overwhelming influence in Poland. Everyone would be pleased"—"Except the Poles!" I interjected—"What would that matter? No one would agree with them,"

answered the Emperor, "and there would be no further need to worry about them." I asked whether he imagined that Poland, within its present restricted borders, without seaports, would not struggle incessantly for enlargement and thereby endanger peace? He replied that its wings must be cut so that it could not struggle.

He added that if he made these proposals to the Russians they would undoubtedly reply rightly that they would do it when they were masters of the situation. This was a Russian standpoint, and as such a justifiable one; but it was one which he, who had only to regard the matter from a French point of view, could not well accept.

Afterwards the Emperor discussed the present state of Poland; the incredible laziness of the Russians; the power of the National Government, which has granted the Grand Prince a safe conduct, with which he has been wandering to and fro for months. . . .

I described to him the horrors of the Polish administration, which spreads terror through the land with its political murders; which despatches its death sentences abroad—even to Herr von Bismarck; which is not afraid to tread every human law underfoot by its barbarity. The story of the secret agent of the Russian Government, who was sent to Wielopolski by the National Government, and had his ears cut off, was new to the Emperor and created a painful impression.

The Emperor never referred to the diplomatic aspect of the matter; he made no allusion whatsoever to Prussia's relation to the Polish problem, although by my remarks I gave him ample opportunity.

*Prince Richard Metternich to Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen
Fontainebleau, 12th June, 1863.*

The King of Prussia telegraphs from the Château of Babelsberg:—

"I congratulate Your Majesty with all my heart on the new and brilliant success of the fine and courageous army of France.—WILLIAM, KING.

The Emperor, not knowing that it was from Babelsberg,

believed at first that it was from the King of Wurtemburg and was most astonished . . . The Emperor said to me that the King of Prussia had a very good heart at bottom ; he regretted that he had not more strength of character. I answered His Majesty that I thought I could say that the King of Prussia was a very worthy man, and I could not help adding that he seemed to have at the same time enough ambition . . . to be worthy of the more or less fantastic plans of a Bonaparte. The Emperor looked at me astonished, and asked me what I meant.

(Metternich spoke of Austria's desire for peace, and the delicacy of the Polish question, but the Emperor again urged the Austrians to draw towards France.)

"I believe that you have everything to gain in going with France and England," he said, "and with France alone if England does not want to follow us. Together we would command the whole of Europe : Germany would be divided in two, some with you the others with Prussia. But what is certain is that we would do what we liked with Europe. You don't understand your interests as I do ; well, I tell you so again. I said it not long since to M. de Hübner. I believe that our *entente* can be maintained on the most peaceful bases.

"I do not doubt that if misfortune wanted to separate us Prussia would try and place herself in the cleft ; but as long as we seem united I absolutely defy Prussia to raise the value of her ambition."

Lord Palmerston to Lord Cowley

13th August, 1863.

It would be a good thing for Europe that a regular and orderly government should be established in Mexico, and that probably could be done only by a monarchy.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

13th November, 1863.

What is certain is that Drouyn is already preparing an honourable retreat for His Majesty. He says, therefore, that happen what will the position of the Emperor is not only excellent but better than it has ever been. Should Europe respond to the call to her, the Emperor will be the demigod

of the times. Should Europe, on the contrary, refuse, the Emperor becomes a free agent, free to take up or to leave each question that may present itself according as his interests may suit him—or if tired of this world's vagaries and taking counsel of his somewhat advanced years he wishes for a quiet life, he can shrug his shoulders, wonder at the apathy of Europe, wash his hands at the consequence of that apathy, and pass his time in creating new boulevards and looking to the material interests of France alone. . . . But should, in the third hypothesis, some accept and some refuse the Congress, the Emperor would know who were his friends and he would seek alliances according to the exigencies of the moment (as if he had ever done anything else).

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

11th December, 1863.

The Emperor, having evinced such unmistakable determination not to speak to me on political matters, while I knew, at the same time, that he was expressing himself to other English here respecting Her Majesty's Government in terms which showed the greatest irritation, I resolved to break the ice myself. Last night, therefore, I took an opportunity of telling him that some of the conversations had been repeated to me—that I had heard among other things that he had complained in no measured terms of the form of your despatch and of its publication before it had been communicated to the French Government. There were points, I said, on which I wished to set him right without desiring to intrude upon him any general conversation if he was disinclined to talk to me.

His Majesty replied in a tone more angry than I have ever known him to assume that what I had heard was true, and that he conceived he had good reason to complain of the treatment which he had met with at the hands of Her Majesty's Government.

I rejoined that if he would listen to me I thought I could show him that his complaints were ill-founded. With regard to the publication of the despatch before it had been communicated to M. Drouyn de Lhuys, I said that it was the

result of an accident (in fact, the despatch had been delayed for one day by the Ambassador, another by the Minister, and in the meantime the British Government had published it, the form being less courteous than the circumstances demanded).

This explanation seemed to make but little impression on the Emperor. He replied in the same angry tone that his belief was that the despatch had been published at that early date in order to prevent the acceptance of other Powers, that I knew how much he was attached to England, and the English people from whom he had always received the greatest proofs of sympathy. He could not say as much for Her Majesty's Government, who seemed imbued with an animosity towards him. What could be more unfriendly, even if they did not approve the Congress themselves, than to use all their influence to prevent other Powers from accepting it?

I stopped His Majesty short and asked him with some vivacity of tone where he had received the insinuations.

"Everything is known in this world, and the proceedings of your Government are no secret to me. Knowing other things, I have seen a despatch or letter from Count Bernstorff to M. de Bismarck stating that Lord Russell was most anxious that the Prussian Government should reply to my proposal in the same terms as himself."

(Lord Cowley answered that the other Powers had at once referred the Emperor's proposal for a Congress to Great Britain, which had referred the decision back to France. Gradually the Emperor grew calmer, and admitted that each Government liked to lay the responsibilities elsewhere. He then went on to speak of Poland, saying that he feared more trouble in the spring, and that Italy would try her strength with Austria.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

Chantilly, 25th December, 1863.

Mahomet's coffin cannot much longer remain suspended between autocracy and liberalism . . . Rouher was resolved to tell His Majesty ten days ago that the time was

come to speak out plainly ; that the country expected to know what the Emperor's policy was, and that he must have greater liberty of speech.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

24th February, 1864.

It would never do for us to hold out baits of any kind to the Emperor. Possibly some hope of this kind may influence his present conduct. Not that I believe he meditates even to obtain possession of the Rhenish Provinces, though he would not despise a small "*arrondissement de territoire*" if he could get it without fighting. In fact, his reasoning is not to be disputed :—

" If I engage in war, one of two things must happen. It must be successful or the reverse. If successful France will not be satisfied to have squandered men and money for the maintenance of Denmark. She will want something substantial for herself. If I am beaten who will come to my assistance or even pity me ? "

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

13th June, 1864.

Morny had a long conversation yesterday with the Emperor in which he recounted to His Majesty the impressions made upon him by different persons whom he saw during his late short visit to England. His object was to induce the Emperor to make some sort of demonstration in concert with Her Majesty's Government for the preservation of the Danish monarchy, and he thinks that although the Emperor showed himself very much indisposed to do so at first, that his arguments produced some effect towards the close of the conversation. I doubt this being the case. I am afraid that the Emperor has pledged himself too deeply towards the German party to be able to retreat now, even if he would. But in other respects I hope that Morny's language may have done good. He told the Emperor that it was thought that the rupture of the conferences might lead to a change of Government, and that the Emperor was greatly mistaken if he supposed that those who would be

likely to succeed His Majesty's present advisers could or would do more for him than the present Government. The Emperor professed to be convinced of this. Morny then said that the rupture of the Conferences might probably be followed by the apparition of a British fleet in the Baltic and the Adriatic—that it might be that so serious a demonstration would make Germany more reasonable, and that the Danish question might then be solved without the participation of France—an eventuality which would not be pleasing to the French nation.

He added that he had remarked some misgiving in England as to what part the Emperor might take were England to be involved in hostilities with Germany. He had taken upon himself, he said, to assert that His Majesty would never become such a traitor to the English alliance as to take part in a cause on which there was after all no difference of principle between the two Governments. The Emperor warmly assented to this. He then complained of his conduct being for ever misrepresented. If he interfered, he was accused of ambitious intentions; if he abstained he was blamed for his abstention. He was guided at the present moment by the interests of France alone. He would not run the risk of a war with Germany in order to save half a province to the King of Denmark. When Morny hinted that the result, supposing war to be the consequence of interference, might prove more advantageous to France, The Emperor replied that he was satisfied with what he had and did not want more. Nor did France. She preferred peace and tranquility to an increase of territory.

My own opinion is that the Emperor's object is to see us engaged in hostilities. He would then wait to see how the cat jumps, and shape his own course accordingly.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

18th December, 1864.

(Cowley had spoken to the Emperor about Tunis.)

First and foremost he asked me whether there was any change, or likely to be any change, in your policy towards America. I said that I had every reason to suppose that you intended

to persist in a course of strict neutrality. He said that he had heard there was a considerable trade carrying on between New York and the Southern States, and that if this was the case it would give us a right to protest against the continuance of the Northern blockade. I replied that I had also heard of this trade, but that it would, of course, be denied by the Northern Government and probably would be very difficult to prove. His Majesty did not pursue this topic further except to ask how this war was ever to be ended. . . .

His Majesty then went to Germany. He said that he could only account for the policy of Austria by supposing that there was some secret understanding between her and Prussia. He asked me what I thought. I said that at present I did not believe in anything of that kind. He said that every effort had been made by the King of Prussia to induce him to meet the Emperors of Austria and Russia at Stolzenfels, but that he had asked himself what good he would do—that by going there he would have the appearance of sanctioning the Emperor of Russia's conduct to the Poles and the attack of Germany upon Denmark, and that he had declined going.

He had, however, been obliged in common courtesy to pay a visit to the Emperor of Russia at Nice in return for the visit which the Czar had paid the Empress at Schwalbach, that the meeting there had been a friendly one, but that very little of political interest had passed between them, that he had recommended the unhappy Poles to the Emperor of Russia's benevolence, but that the subject was evidently a sore one, and that he had obtained no other answer than that His Majesty's intentions were good, but that the time for clemency had not yet arrived. He then asked whether the Grand Duke Constantine was not to be sent back as Governor, and was told that he probably might be later.

The state of Greece the Emperor thought very unsatisfactory, but is not astonished at it when constitutional principles are applied to people who have no moral principles and no education.

We then got upon the Italian Convention. I expressed the satisfaction with which its conclusion had been received in England, and I said that any moral assistance which Her

Majesty's Government could give to help its strict execution would be given. The Emperor said that the more he reflected the more he was satisfied with what he had done, that, no doubt, difficulties would arise in the course of its accomplishment, but that he was sanguine as to eventual results. In the meantime, there would be a pause during which the new Italian Kingdom could be consolidated and its finances be put in order. His Majesty spoke with the highest praise of the Italian people. He said that they had shown such good sense that they deserved success, and upon my asking him whether he had changed his opinion (for he had always told me that although he was not unfriendly to the Unity of Italy he thought its realization impossible), he said that if the Government of Italy would devote itself to administering with justice and would economize he was of opinion that unity would be carried out. Mazzini, he was afraid, would give trouble, and would be a great difficulty to the Government.

Adverting to the future, I asked him whether His Majesty thought that the Pope would remain in Rome, whenever the French troops should quit it. He replied that he had hoped so, that when it came to the point the Pope could not abandon the interests committed to his keeping. It was not the Pope alone that would go away. He must consider the crowd of cardinals, priests, and others who must accompany him. He considered, further, that the Pope would be forced to institute a better system of Government.

It was like protection and free trade. So long as the manufacturers were protected they would do nothing to help themselves. So with the Pope, so long as he could rely on French protection he would do nothing. Take away that protection and he would find the necessity of helping himself.

The Emperor is satisfied with the accounts which he continues to receive from Mexico. He told me that he had yesterday received a letter from the Emperor Maximilian.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

I hope that the question of the Suez Canal may be now considered to be in a fair way of settlement.

13th April, 1865.

not answer for it that Drouyn may not give us trouble. I made it a question of honour with the Emperor, telling him that Her Majesty's Government had no confidence in M. de Lesseps, and could not advise the Sultan to leave to an uncertain future any transaction with that gentleman, but that they felt certain that any appeal to His Majesty would be met, as such appeals always were, in a fair and conciliatory spirit. The Emperor said that he had no confidence himself in de Lesseps.

I asked him if he was going to Algiers as was reported. He said that nothing was decided ; that he was waiting for reports from Macmahon as to whether the fresh outbreaks had been quelled or not, but that he wished very much to go and see the interior of the country and judge himself of its state. This led him to talk of his difficulties there. The cost, he said, was enormous. There was at this time an army of 80,000 men there, and this was insufficient to protect the frontier. It was not a colony, he said, but an independent kingdom which nobody knew how to govern, and it might be made one of the richest countries in the world. He went on to talk about Cochin China and New Caledonia where attempts at colonization were equally fruitless and expensive.

The Emperor expressed great sorrow for the reverses of the Confederates. He does not seem apprehensive of any American interference with Mexico. He has received friendly assurances from the Federal Government. He seems resolved not to abandon Mexico till Maximilian can do without him.

Lord Cowley to Lord Russell

17th June, 1865.

With respect to the Empress's health it is true that Metternich on his return from Compiègne thought ill of her, but I have it on the best authority, namely the great English lady's doctor here, who is treating her, that *as yet* there is nothing seriously the matter. The fact is she had worried herself to death over the Emperor's liaison with Mlle Belanger. This worry had fallen upon her nerves and produced loss of appetite, nausea, etc. ; but she is getting all right again. She was continually skating during the late cold weather, and certainly she was looking well enough when I saw her the other day.



EARL COWLEY, Ambassador, 1852-1867

From a photograph in the possession of Sir Victor Wellesley

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

Compiègne, 1st December, 1865.

The Emperor yesterday after dinner asked me to go with him to his room . . . I asked him in the course of the conversation after the statement of his views, which you will find hereafter, whether he had received any intelligence which made him apprehend hostile proceedings on the part of the United States. He answered me positively none, as far as the Government was concerned, but he added that there was no knowing what might happen when Congress met, and what the people might do without the consent or the connivance of the Government.

He spoke of what he called the *outrecuidance* of both Government and people, and of the insolence of their tone. He attributed this in a great measure to the certainty they felt that a war between America and France would in reality be a source of satisfaction to England as a war between America and England would be a cause of satisfaction to France ; and he had been led to ask himself, he said, whether some agreement might not be arrived at between the English and French Governments by which each should bind itself to assist the other in the event of any attack of the United States on either. He expressed his conviction that the knowledge of the existence of such an agreement would at once put a stop to any hostile intentions on the part of the United States, supposing such to be entertained.

I said that a similar idea had in the course of the last year more than once presented itself to my mind, but that I had not even made mention of it to my Government because although I did not doubt that the realization of it would have all the *present* effect which the Emperor anticipated from it, it would be necessary to look to the future (Lord Cowley meant that the English were not really likely to be keen on defending French interests in Mexico, nor the French on defending British interests in Canada. And we could not define what was the defensive in a *casus belli*. In fact he foresaw that the British would always have Canada and the French not always have Mexico, and as soon as they left it they would abandon the agreement.) "It is the great fault

of the Emperor," wrote Lord Cowley, "that when he wants to do something he will not believe that all the difficulties cannot be made to vanish."

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

Compiègne, 2nd December, 1865.

I questioned the Emperor during the conversation to which I alluded yesterday, as to his opinion of the prospects of Maximilian. It is evident that he considers them very problematic and that he would be glad to get rid of the whole concern. He said that what was wanted was 25,000 more French troops, but that he could not send them. He thinks Maximilian wanting in decision of character and not up to the difficulties of his position.

After Mexico the Emperor turned the conversation to the affairs of Germany. He said that the folly and supineness of Austria was inconceivable—that Bismarck had endeavoured to defend the conduct of Prussia and that he had been rather a listener than a participator in the conversation which they had had together—that Bismarck's plan was to make a money bargain with Austria, that is to buy her out of the Duchies. That he had given no encouragement to Bismarck's ambitious projects ; on the contrary, in the little he had said, he had evinced dissatisfaction of the proceedings of Prussia. I asked him whether Bismarck had made any proposals to him. He answered readily and distinctly in the negative.

Bismarck's object, he said, seemed to be to ascertain what France would do in the event of the annexation of the Duchies to Prussia and a consequent war between Prussia and Austria. He had given him to understand that such a *dénouement* would not be pleasing to the French nation, and that if war were to be the consequence of it his desire would be to observe strict neutrality. His abstention from war in defence of Bismarck was not to be considered an approval of the proceedings of Germany, but a dislike to involve France in hostilities, which in that case must have become general. With regard to the Flemish Provinces and Belgium, he had no wish (or intention) of disturbing their present position. But he could enter into no promises nor could he even

discuss eventualities. While fully determined to respect existing rights, were a general war to intervene and the events of that war to place him in the possession of territory not now belonging to France, he could not say what, under such circumstances, he might find himself obliged to do.

(Lord Cowley asked him if he thought there was any movement in Belgium in favour of incorporation into France. He said no and) "he attributed this to the admirable administration of King Leopold, who," he said, "had succeeded in establishing a true feeling of nationality in Belgium."

* *Count Goltz to William I*

Paris, 29th August, 1865.

Yesterday I had the honour of dining with the Emperor Napoleon at Fontainebleau. His Majesty welcomed me graciously. He inquired immediately after Your Majesty and Her Majesty the Queen. He gave me full particulars of his Swiss journey which would have been thoroughly satisfactory but for the unfortunate accident which ended it. The Empress is still at Neufchatel nursing the injured. She refused the help of any of the Court ladies and is all alone with the sick. The Emperor said that these harrowing experiences have tried her severely, and that she and the injured cannot possibly return before next Thursday; consequently the start for Biarritz will probably be put off till 7th September. The Emperor still hopes that the Empress will be in time to receive their Royal Highnesses the Grand Duke and Duchess of Baden whom he expects next Friday.

I reached Fontainebleau at half-past five, and left at nine. During the whole of this time, before, during, and after dinner, the Emperor conversed with me and chiefly on the political situation created by the Convention of Gastein.

The Emperor broached the subject by saying: "The question of the Duchies, always a difficult one, now puzzles me completely." I insisted on the purely provisional character of the new scheme, showing that popular interest demanded that the confusion caused by the joint administration should cease, and that a regular and independent government for each individual province should be established. The inherent imperfections of the new

organization seemed to prove that it cannot last long. I added that Your Majesty would prefer to agree to this experiment before taking a leap in the dark. I said that before taking these extreme measures Your Majesty's Government must sift all the evidence and take count of the European situation and the attitude of the other great Powers. As regards France, I have asked Your Majesty's President of the Council whether France would maintain a benevolent neutrality whilst we annex the Duchies of the Elbe. But I added that M. Drouyn de Lhuys refused to pledge himself for the whole duration of the struggle or for any ulterior consequences which may result.

The Emperor replied : "I believe that you have done your country a great service by encouraging no illusions on this matter. As a matter of fact, how can you expect me to pledge myself beforehand to make no move, and to ask for nothing, whatever happens, whatever dimensions the struggle may assume, whatever changes may be made in the balance of Europe ? You know my views with regard to Prussia. You know that I desire, that I consider it essential, that she should extend herself and that she should be in a position to follow an absolutely independent policy and to free herself from all foreign influence. My political bias should enable you to judge of the opportuneness of the great German struggle. And it seems to me that you yourselves will be unable to deal with any other matter except the Duchies, for it is a mistake to sell the bear's skin before you have caught the bear. In this respect I have had one experience which will serve me as a rule for the future. Formerly it was a profound secret, but I see no harm in talking about it now. Before the war of Italy I had arranged with King Victor Emmanuel to march after him ; I had exacted his promise not to attack the Pope ; I had told him that if he attacked Austria I would not help him ; but I had promised him my alliance in case he was attacked and for this eventuality I had offered him my co-operation to extend his kingdom to the number of twelve or thirteen million inhabitants. Afterwards, when I had concluded the peace of Villafranca, the King told me that there were not twelve million inhabitants,

and he was right ; this embarrassed me greatly. Since then I have determined to be more prudent and never to make a promise unless I am certain that I can keep it."

I told the Emperor that in our last conversation M. Drouyn de Lhuys had raised my hopes that, even if the war assumed the largest proportions, France could easily agree with Prussia, but that he could not see the smallest possibility of her reaching an agreement with Austria. I asked if His Majesty took the same view ? " Entirely," answered the Emperor, without any hesitation.

Before we entered the dining-room the Emperor again expressed the painful surprise which the Convention of Gastein had caused him. " When you began the war," he said, " you declared that you were ready to free from Danish domination the German populations that belong to Germany ; that was an object that claimed approval ; you said that the two Duchies had a right to be reunited ; you declared that you were ready to consult the inhabitants as to their future lot. And now you call a Convention which gives you at least the appearance—I repeat the appearance—of dividing them and of sharing them between yourselves ; giving to Austria a province which she does not know what to do with, and taking for yourselves a province of mixed nationalities, although you have promised to restore the Danes to Denmark. This recalls the Partition of Poland. This may be only in appearance, I repeat, but it is necessary to manipulate public opinion, and you must have noticed already that this is turned against you."

During dinner the Emperor told me that Austria had proposed to submit the matter of the Duchies to a Congress, but that he had refused positively to interfere. Then he asked me about Russia's attitude. I replied that I knew nothing about it, but I repeated the suppositions that I had mentioned to the Empress. The Emperor seemed to suspect the Russian Cabinet of a hand in the arrangement of Gastein. Afterwards he enquired about the attitude of Mr. de Pfordten. I replied that this Minister seemed to maintain a prudent reserve. The Emperor seemed to believe in the complete abstention of England.

His Majesty had evidently received reports concerning the dispositions of the Court of Vienna. For he observed spontaneously that the *entente* of Gastein and of Salzburg did not seem to have effaced the memory of former differences. Austria felt herself profoundly humiliated and irritation against France prevailed not only in public opinion and in ministerial circles but also with the Emperor Franz Josef himself. I think it right to mention these communications because they show that it is not the re-establishment of the *entente* between the two German powers which displeases the Emperor of the French.

After dinner the Emperor talked and smoked with Marshal Randon and myself. He asked me the strength of our army in case of a war against Austria. Afterwards he expressed his profound admiration for a military organization which permitted a Power, possessing only half the population of France, to put in the field an army almost equally numerous. Whilst discussing our military organization with keen interest, he told the Minister of War that the French certainly possessed the military spirit in time of war, but in time of peace it is far more highly developed among the Prussians. He expressed his peculiar admiration for the *esprit de corps* of the Prussian officers.

Later the Emperor invited me to accompany him into the garden. There he embarked again upon a political conversation, saying : " If you are writing to M. de Bismarck, tell him that if war had broken out between Prussia and Austria I should have observed a benevolent neutrality to Prussia, but that I am surprised, immensely surprised, at what has happened."

I told His Majesty that, although the crisis was only deferred, the day following the signature of a new agreement was scarcely suited for the discussion of warlike possibilities in the future, and that consequently the fact that I discussed them with the Emperor proved our entire confidence in his intentions. But if, after three months, or six months or more, the crisis should return under the same circumstances which had preceded the signature of the Convention of 14th August, I believed that we could count on the same dispositions in the Emperor.

"Certainly," replied His Majesty. "You will always find me well disposed towards Prussia."

It was in the same spirit that the Emperor continued the conversation. "I regret to see," he said, "that Prussia is every day more and more disposed to abandon her traditional vocation as head of the national movement in Germany." I pointed out to the Emperor that the internal struggle, a deplorable result of the blindness of the parties and of the tendencies of parliamentary omnipotence, for the moment would render fruitless any such efforts as Your Majesty might make. "I can't agree," replied the Emperor. "Let the King issue a genuinely liberal programme for the organization of Germany, let him place himself at the head of the movement—there is no need for His Majesty to go to war about it—all the liberals will applaud him and these miserable parliamentary squabbles and this sad affair of the Duchies will be forgotten."

I forgot to mention that at the beginning of the conversation the Emperor expressed his conviction that no one could have prevented Italy from taking part in the war against Austria unless the latter had ceded Venetia.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

2nd December, 1865.

("Goltz confirms the Emperor's accounts of his conversation with Bismarck.")

After this I myself turned the conversation upon the internal affairs of France, by complimenting the Emperor on the Financial Reforms which he has commenced. He entered at some length into the reductions which were making in the army, explaining that they forced him to send away about 1,300 officers, which caused discontent, whereas if the saving had been effected in the men, he should not have cared so much. But a reduction of men would have left still more officers in the cadres without anything to do. He hoped that in a few months the ill feeling, which he admitted to exist, would have passed away.

It is evident that the Emperor in consenting to these reductions has yielded only to an imperious necessity. Indeed, Fould tells me as much, and he expects the Legislative Body

to ask for further reductions in men for which, he says, the Emperor is prepared. I shall not believe in such an act of independence on the part of the Legislatives until I see it. Fould equally expects a demand for further reductions in the Naval Service.

I asked the Emperor what he intended to do with his Chambers. He replied that he should let them go on as they were. No doubt the long discussions on the address, which occupied the Chambers six weeks or two months on their first meeting, were greatly to be deprecated, but he was disposed to prefer them to giving the right of interpellation which would keep the country in agitation during the whole session instead of for a limited period at the commencement. He blamed Morny for not having exercised a firmer hand, when the right of discussing the address was first given. He said that that was another reason against granting any change, that it would give an air of instability to all his proceedings. The death of Brillault had forced some modifications on him. It would not be safe to grant others.

"*Enfin,*" he said, "*nous vivons au jour le jour.*"

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

6th December, 1865.

(The Emperor had received Lord Cowley after dinner in his travelling clothes.)

"I then," wrote Cowley, "went into the question of America. I said that I had represented His Majesty's conversation with me rather as putting forward an idea than containing a proposal, and that, as I had expected, the difficulties which struck me against its realization had even been felt with double force by Her Majesty's Government . . . His Majesty ended this part of the conversation by saying that on reflection his views coincided with yours. He must fairly admit that there were insuperable difficulties attending anything like a positive engagement between the two Governments with reference to events in America and that the best course to take would be to act as much as possible together whenever the conduct of the United States might render concert advisable. . . .

The Emperor has evidently great misgivings as to the success of his schemes in Mexico, but he will not abandon Maximilian whatever it may cost him unless he can do so with honour.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

6th January, 1866.

I saw the Emperor this afternoon for a considerable time. I thought him out of spirits, but more preoccupied with Spanish affairs than anything else. He dislikes a military revolution—not that he has one to fear here—and he thinks democratic principles in the ascendant everywhere.

By the way, he told me that the young King of Portugal seemed bitten by the idea of annexing Spain to Portugal, and had asked his advice. He had told him on no account to put himself at the head of any movement, and at all events to wait until he should be sought for. He had at the same time expressed his conviction that Spain and Portugal could never amalgamate. I said that the young King must be mad if he thought the contrary. Look how difficult it was to keep the Provinces of Spain together! What would it be between rival parties in Spain and Portugal.

The Emperor touched but lightly on the affairs of Mexico and the United States, and seemed indisposed to talk about them, and of course I did not press him, but as he appeared to apprehend a good deal of insolence from America, I told him he should make up his mind to bear with it, and to look to facts rather than to words.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

9th January, 1866.

Nothing can be worse than the last accounts from Mexico. . . . The Emperor is dreadfully puzzled what to tell the Chambers, and Drouyn what to put into his blue or yellow book. I have advised them to say as little as possible, not to compromise matters.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

22nd January, 1866.

The Emperor's speech is a poor affair and he seemed to feel it to be such himself. He blundered and faltered continually. There was but little enthusiasm on the part of

the Chambers. His Majesty nearly came upon his nose in descending from the throne, his spur having caught in the carpet. Supposing he had come down, what omen would have been drawn. The Empress was very coldly received. I suppose that people feel she is the cause of the Mexican difficulty.

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon*¹

6th March, 1866.

I enclose a curious paper of calculations which makes the year 1869 ominous for the Emperor, and that is the year in which the next elections must take place and to which everybody is already looking with alarm. You will see the curious coincidences which took place with regard to Louis Philippe and how the same coincidences threaten the Emperor.

Louis Philippe came to the throne in 1830.

He was born in 1773.

Marie Amelie was born in 1782.

They were married in 1809.

He lost his throne in 1848.

1830	1830	1830
1	1	1
7	7	8
7	8	0
3	2	9
—	—	—
1848	1848	1848

The Emperor Louis Napoleon came to the throne in 1852.

He was born in 1808.

The Empress was born in 1826.

They were married in 1853.

1852	1852	1852
1	1	1
8	8	8
0	2	5
8	6	3
—	—	—
1869	1869	1869

1869 is the year of the next elections.

¹ Reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

* Count Goltz to Count Bismarck

Very confidential. By Herr V. Radowitz.

Paris, 6th March, 1866.

Immediately after my return yesterday morning, I sought an audience with the Emperor and with his Minister of Foreign Affairs. Both audiences took place yesterday. To M. Drouyn de Lhuys I merely made certain general communications about our relations towards Austria, but avoided all mention of the proposed negotiations with Italy, the confidential exchange of ideas with the Emperor Napoleon, or His Majesty's letter to the King concerning it. Consequently, with the exception of the usual assurances, the Minister had no cause to make any further statement concerning the Duchies of the Elbe and the approaching struggle between the two German Powers. His observations with regard to the Danube principalities, and other matters which relate to them, I propose to make the subject of a separate letter.

The Emperor at once read His Majesty the King's letter, and then asked me to supply the explanations it promised.

I unravelled the existing situation briefly. I told him that our relations with Austria were so strained that a speedy conflict seemed inevitable. The position was not merely the result of differences concerning the present control and future control of the Elbe Duchies, about which the negotiations between the two Cabinets were temporarily at a standstill. It concerned the whole Austrian attitude which, as was shown in almost all countries by the immoderate attacks of such sections of the Press as are inspired by Austrian agents, is one of systematic enmity towards Prussia; so that in Vienna itself the crisis is fast coming to a head, and recourse to hostilities is considered a mere question of time.

Under these circumstances the King's Government is compelled to decide beforehand upon the moment when the declaration of war will best suit Prussian interests; and thus to prevent the Cabinet at Vienna from choosing a time to suit its own convenience. In order to reach a reliable opinion upon which the final conclusions must depend, two preliminaries are necessary. In the first place the King's

Government wishes to assure itself of Italy's eventual co-operation, and to reach a binding agreement concerning the object of the common action that will result. This task will be undertaken by a confidential mission to Florence. Secondly, His Majesty the King desires to lay this object confidentially before the Emperor, to obtain His Majesty's approval, and to learn what results favourable to French interests the Emperor expects to derive from it.

Subsequently I explained that, in addition to the acquisition of the Duchies, the object of our joint action involved a closer union between the North German States. As to the character of this union, I pointed out that it would be analogous to the scheme promulgated for the whole of Germany in 1849; only it was probable that parliamentary influence would receive a less prominent position, whilst greater scope would be allowed for the independence of princes, and for the autonomy of single states. I also mentioned the possibility that, if one or other of these states persisted in a hostile attitude towards Prussia, it must be reduced to submission uncompromisingly. As a hypothesis for the limitation of our objective, I indicated the hope that it might obtain the moral and material co-operation of Bavaria; in which case the military generalship in Southern Germany would be entrusted to this State. Finally I begged the Emperor to name any special benefits that he would be likely to claim later, in order to reconcile French national feeling to this extension of Prussian power.

The Emperor listened to my statements with intense interest. He assented to the proposed policy of the Prussian Government; he recognized its justice and the loftiness of its conceptions; which were based upon a national question infinitely broader than the comparatively trivial concern of the Elbe Duchies. But he did not conceal that it was very difficult for him to name beforehand the compensation that he must ultimately claim for France. That his attention should be drawn to a scheme, whose execution might not be long delayed, was altogether right. But in point of fact he was in the position of offering the French nation a prize if they will allow, or even encourage an

important addition to Prussian power which they will unquestionably regard with jealousy. However free he may be personally from narrow judgments and petty considerations, he has to reckon in his policy upon a force of public opinion which is not merely noticeable, but, in wide circles, is undoubtedly powerful. We need only read the speeches of Thiers and Jules Favres, to be convinced of their obvious preference to the plans proposed. Still it was very difficult for him to name a reward at the present moment. Hitherto in Belgium events had developed quietly, and it was not yet clear whether and when the outbreak of party strife between the Catholics and the Liberals would lead to a further division of territory. Also His Majesty the King would hardly wish to set his hand to the disposal of Belgium at the present moment. Of all the neighbouring provinces which might occur to France, French sympathy hitherto had manifested itself only in Rhenish Bavaria, where indeed it seemed to be very strong. But if we were counting on the co-operation of Bavaria, it would be difficult to fix upon a province which, in case of a military conflict, would certainly become inaccessible to that country. French sympathies were deeply concerned in Luxemburg. When I hazarded a suggestion of French Switzerland, the Emperor would not consent. He repeated several times : "That is a big question. It needs consideration."

I remarked that I could not expect the Emperor to give me an immediate and definite answer on this difficult question. His Majesty might prefer to consider the circumstances carefully and to tell me more later. I only wanted to report the first impression that my communications had made upon the Emperor and upon the reception which my information had met with.

The Emperor authorized me to inform Your Excellency that we can reckon both before and after upon his benevolent neutrality and upon his unalterable sympathy with Prussia. It was only on the matter of the bait which was to be dangled before France's eyes that he could not answer without previous mature deliberation, although he fully believed that we could reach an agreement. He hoped to see me again

in a few days and to tell me more. Afterwards he reverted to the question and said : A few days ago Marshal Vaillant asked him to pay especial heed to those boundaries which from a strategic point of view concern France's interests exclusively. The Marshal added that the boundaries left to France by the Peace of 1814 corresponded with those interests, and that she should, therefore, strive to recover eventually the territory that she lost in 1815. The Emperor referred repeatedly to Landau. He had stated previously that His Majesty the King's disinclination to renounce either Prussian or German territory made the choice of a suitable compensation very difficult.

I said that I had often discussed with Prussian officers the strategic requirements of Prussia in case certain eventualities should affect her boundaries. Almost everywhere I met with the view that the union of Southern Belgium with France, and the withdrawal of the Prussian boundary to the Meuse, would make our possession of Liege positively essential, if we were not to be overcome by the first blow on the left bank of the Rhine. The Emperor recognized the justice of this argument.

His Majesty asked whether I had made these or any similar disclosures concerning present events to his Foreign Minister. I denied this, remarking that I had restricted myself to giving M. Drouyn de Lhuys a very general idea of our position with regard to Austria, and told him that His Majesty the King was anxious that the proposed exchange of ideas should preserve a strictly confidential and purely personal character. The Emperor explained that he had only asked on the chance that he might have to handle the circumstances in the same way, and that he would now know what to do.

In the course of conversation the Emperor told me that the Bavarian Ambassador had consulted M. Drouyn de Lhuys as to the attitude Bavaria should adopt in case of a war between Prussia and Austria. The Minister refused this advice ; but when Herr Wendland insisted, on the plea that he had not asked the advice of the French Minister but the private opinion of M. Drouyn de Lhuys, he replied : "The worst thing to do in such a case is to remain neutral."

The Emperor confirmed this opinion. Concerning the likely attitude, and the fighting strength of the neighbouring North German States, His Majesty betrayed the vaguest and most faulty information, which I corrected.

The impression that I gathered from this interview is that the Emperor is very anxious to encourage the execution of the plan which I sketched for him and that before long he will probably demand the so-called difference between 1814 and 1815 as compensation. I think it would be useful if Your Excellency were to wire me advice as to whether or what I shall reply immediately; and whether I am to attempt to exclude all Prussian or German territory, in any case under the heading of compensation.

During my recent visit to the Foreign Ministry I met the Italian Ambassador, who begged me, very impatiently, for an interview. I received him on my return from M. Drouyn de Lhuys. He asked whether I had brought the Prussian-Italian treaty from Berlin. I told him that we would deal with that in Florence, but I made him promise to say nothing about it for the present. He remarked that General La Marmora had already sent a special messenger to Berlin but that he had pronounced it more desirable that negotiations should be held in Florence. He did not raise the slightest doubt that our plans will succeed. He told me that in August the Emperor told him to encourage the co-operation of the Italians if war breaks out between Prussia and Austria, and he insists that His Majesty's opinion remains unchanged. He spoke with joyful anticipation of the likelihood of a war fought by Prussia and Italy against Austria.

Postscript.

I have just received Your Excellency's telegram, No. 73. I will refer to its comments on Rhenish Bavaria and Luxembourg, which partly answer my questions, at my next interview with the Emperor. As I said in my report, the desire to delay a decision was nowhere expressed in his remarks. He did not agree with me when I hazarded the opinion that, with regard to Belgium, it was the attitude of France which would ultimately hasten or delay the maturity of the question. He has never even hinted that he will simply ask for the

Duchies of the Elbe in compensation. Furthermore he never reproached me for my *résumé* of our former conversation, in which he declared that he would not oppose this annexation, and would only claim an explanation in the case of further acquisitions.

I will visit Signor Nigra at once, and provide him with the particulars of the Special Mission to Berlin which Your Excellency's telegram conveys.

Second Postscript.

The telegram which I have just despatched reports the readiness of the Italian Ambassador to execute the mission to Berlin immediately.

* *Emperor Napoleon III to King William I*

Palace of the Tuileries, 7th March, 1866.

Your Majesty's letter, a proof of a confidence to which I attach immense value, has been handed to me by Count Goltz. Your Majesty is right to count on my personal friendship and my political sympathy; but I think that, whilst we watch the development of the situation, we must await progress before forming our resolutions.

If serious events should arise in Germany, my formal intention is to observe neutrality, meanwhile preserving with your Majesty's Government the friendly relations which have long existed between us. Later, if extraordinary circumstances should alter the balance of Europe, I should ask permission to examine the new bases with Your Majesty, in order to secure the interests of my country.

Till then, I think it is sufficient for us to count reciprocally on each other's good faith and our desire to preserve our mutual friendship.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

13th March, 1866.

I had a long conversation with Goltz—he seemed to give me a true account of his own impressions and policy, and certainly he did not spare Bismarck as you will see.

First of all, then, he said that he did not think a crisis between Prussia and Austria imminent. There would be

many ups and downs before the fatal word war was spoken. This must be expected from the character of the King. He, Goltz, had gone to Berlin, where he had not been for nearly three years, upon his own affairs, but of course, being there, his opinion had been asked not only by the King but by everybody whom he came across. He had but one word for King and peasant : " Whatever you do, don't go to war."

He had been obliged, however, to be careful as to the manner in which he had given this advice. Bismarck was too strong to attack, and it would not do to gainsay his policy, therefore his (Goltz's) language had been in favour of the annexation of the Duchies to Prussia and of Bismarck's internal policy. On this former question he had agreed with Bismarck in his heart ; on the latter he had not—but he had maintained that the Duchies might be annexed and Bismarck retain his place without driving the country into war. This was the theme he had always maintained with the King, that he might obtain what he wanted without war. The King was inclined to take this view of matters, but the moment Bismarck got at him, there came a day of hesitation and warlike propensity, and so it went on and so it would go on for some time longer. . . .

As to the internal state of Prussia, the delusion of King, Court, and Bismarck, was, Goltz said, astounding. They all believed that the country really was with Bismarck, while it was impossible for any impartial man not to see that the whole of the intelligence and wealth of the country was against him.

(Bismarck had said to Goltz : "*Après moi le déluge,*" for he did not believe that the Crown Prince could govern.)

* *Prince Metternich to Count Mensdorff*

Private.

Paris, 9th April, 1866.

I have heard from various sources so many contradictory insinuations concerning the secret inclinations of the Emperor in the matter which engrosses us, of the efforts of M. Benedetti and Prince Napoleon to entice the Emperor into Prussian waters, of the reaction which has taken place in M. de Bismarck's favour which seems to reveal itself in

the order given to the Press to weight the scales in his favour and to discontinue its attacks on Prussian policy, that I thought it advisable to evade them all and to address myself directly to the Emperor. My conversation with His Majesty confirmed the idea which I had deduced logically concerning his political needs, which I confided to Your Excellency in one of my last trips.

The Emperor said that he did not believe in war ; that it was so coarse an affair that neither of the hostile powers could decide to take up arms. As for himself, he had decided to observe a strict neutrality unless French interests were compromised. This neutrality he has decided to carry so far as to avoid giving advice either to Prussia or to Italy. The Emperor, whilst he was *evidently anxious to insinuate that they plagued him at Berlin to espouse the Prussian policy*, affirmed that he rejected all proposals from that quarter. Similarly he asserted that he abode loyally by his declaration, upon which I have acted, that Italy would attack us at her own risk and peril. He said that he had not liked to take the responsibility of dissuading Italy from taking advantage of the opportunities which events might offer her. In short, His Majesty gave me to understand that he would declare himself only when serious events arose.

I told the Emperor that in case of defeat we could only trust to Europe to let everything go to the dogs ; but that in case of success either in the North or South, we should probably be willing to reach a friendly agreement with him, and to divide the fruits of the struggle to our mutual advantage.

The Emperor thanked me for this assurance and added that an *entente* between us would be necessary whilst we were trying to consolidate our friendly relations.

I saw the Empress later and told her about the countless rumours relating to a secret understanding with Prussia. "I am sure," I added, "that they are telling me outrageous lies."

Her Majesty pointed out to me that there was something absurd and contradictory in the assertions of political intriguers, who are always seeking difficulties where none exist.

The future will prove whether I was right to believe the Emperor's assurances. I shall believe in him till I have proof to the contrary. For hitherto the Emperor has always spoken to me frankly. He has never deceived me. His words conveyed the impression of truth, besides they agree perfectly with undoubted facts.

* *Count Goltz to Count Bismarck*

Paris, 10th April, 1866.

. . . The news conveyed to me by Your Excellency's telegram of yesterday, No. 164, that the proposal has been moved at yesterday's sitting of the Bundesversammlung, in the course of the day was announced from Frankfurt, to the French Government also, and passed by private telegram to the outside public and to the Press.

Consequently the matter formed the chief subject of political conversation at the grand concert which was held at the Tuileries last evening. Opinions were divided but the impression was immense. The Emperor broached the subject with me immediately and, although his first words seemed to indicate his belief that this obviates the likelihood of war (a point on which I promptly expressed my doubts), his pleasure at the suggestion of universal suffrage and straight voting was unmistakable. He said that he had permitted M. Drouyn de Lhuys to express a certain reserve for the future in his despatch. This is intended to allay the fear which prevails here that the balance of Europe may be dislocated to the detriment of France. I expressed the hope that this despatch did not indicate any dissatisfaction on the part of the French Government.

The Emperor endeavoured to reassure me on this point, by pointing out that it was merely a matter of a few phrases, which were inserted to calm public opinion. I replied that any such anxiety was quite unfounded. His Majesty the King had no intention of restoring the German Kingdom, and in this his plan differed entirely from that which the Emperor Franz Josef laid before the Princes' Congress at Vienna in 1863. We desired only that preponderating influence in Northern Germany which was indispensable to the geographical conditions of our position, and which

Austria was trying to disturb. We did not want to extend this influence to Southern Germany, but to leave it preferably to Bavaria, which would be free to monopolize it or to share it with Austria at her discretion. I added that so far no project had been evolved sufficiently definite to admit of any verdict on the consequences. An agreement between the German Governments was the preliminary step : to be followed later by parliamentary debate. I considered that the real significance of the present move lay in its call for universal suffrage and straight voting. It remained to be seen what line the German democracy would take.

My conversation with the Emperor lasted a long time. It occupied most of the pause between the first and second parts of the concert, and attracted general attention. I was therefore obliged to abandon further explanations, and to content myself with the conviction that the Emperor had welcomed my communications very favourably.

His Majesty informed me that the treaty between Prussia and Italy has been signed. I enquired whether the agreement concluded was conformable with a permanent treaty ? The Emperor seemed ignorant of these details, and I had to explain that it was a case of finding a formula, by which neither of the contracting parties is obliged to continue fighting on behalf of its ally after its own particular object has been achieved. The Emperor fully recognized the justice of this idea. He seems to have acknowledged it in principle, whilst obtaining expert advice concerning its execution.

His Majesty told me in conclusion that both in the Press and in conversation all sorts of views, aims, and utterances are attributed to him. I assured His Majesty that the King trusts him absolutely ; and that no one knows better than I do that the whole is merely a matter of sentiment—since it is based mainly on reports of incidents between the Emperor and myself, of which I, at any rate, am completely ignorant.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

10th April, 1866.

The present state of affairs is so full of interest and importance that I took an opportunity of saying to the Emperor that it was some time since I had had the advantage

of any conversation with His Majesty, and that I should like very much to see him at any leisure time he might have. He readily agreed and appointed me to come this morning although I would rather have waited a day or two to see how these new Prussian proposals are taken in Germany.¹ As it was, although I was with him an hour and a half, I cannot say that I came away much the wiser on the question of Germany. My general impression is this—that the Emperor would not be sorry if hostilities were to break out, but that he has done nothing, and will do nothing, to encourage a rupture. I could not detect a leaning to either side. He thinks the Austrian army the better of the two—the Prussian the better appointed. I asked him whether he believed in war. He replied that he really could not give an opinion. One day he thought it, the next he did not. The new Prussian move must be conceived, and produce *un temps d'arrêt*. He could not see what now was to be done but to await further events.

The Emperor then asked a great many questions with reference to the proposal for a German parliament, as I had been at Frankfurt at the last assembling of one. I told him all I could recollect, and he seemed to consider the application of universal suffrage as of very doubtful advantage. I told him that in my humble opinion it was revolution of the worst kind, which would set all the German States against their Sovereigns, and in which Bismarck would probably be one of the first to suffer. From the observations which the Emperor made, I am entitled, I think, to assume that he is a stranger to the whole scheme, and moreover, that he does not augur well of it. To finish with Germany, I hinted that Austria might, if victory declared in her favour, obtain some compensation in Germany which would enable her to give up Venetia.

I said I supposed that if war broke out, Italy would be the field. The Emperor said most certainly, that she could not do otherwise, and that he feared that the abandonment of Venetia was as far as ever from the contemplation of Austria. If Austria knew her own interests, she would make friends with Italy at once.—There would then be no war.

¹ Bismarck had made a democratic appeal to Germany as a whole.

I tried the ground as to what offers had been made by Prussia to obtain the support of France. The Emperor said that Bismarck had been profuse in giving that which did not belong to him. In fact, his general thesis was that France might take and annex any country where French was the language of the people . . .

The mention of universal suffrage led me to say that universal suffrage did not always produce the effects calculated upon, and that later events in France had made me ask myself whether it had remained as good a friend to the Emperor as he had expected. He spoke very frankly and reasonably about it. He said that no doubt it was an uncertain machine, but as yet he had no right to complain of its working. In the large towns the result had been in favour of democratic candidates, but in the country at large, democracy was at a low ebb. On the whole he had no reason to be dissatisfied.

I asked the Emperor if he had any candidate for the Principalities. He said no, but that the Principalities themselves had tried it on with the hereditary Prince of Siegmaringen and that both his father and the King of Prussia had given a qualified acquiescence.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

13th April, 1866.

Be sure that I never allow an opportunity to escape of reminding the Emperor that Belgium is the *sanctum sanctorum*. But the less one shows suspicion of his designs, the better. I still hold to the opinion that he will not go to war for any acquisition of territory, though if a favourable opportunity occurred, he will get what he can by negotiation. He always talks of Belgium as a country possessing a nationality of its own, and consequently preferring independence to annexation.

* *Prince Metternich to Count Mensdorff*

Paris, 14th April, 1866.

The Emperor had given me an appointment so I visited him last Tuesday, 10th April.

I began by saying that M. de Bismarck's new plan seemed likely to be disapproved of by the whole world and especially

by the Powers that desired peace. The feeling that will be roused in Germany by the proposal to convene a national parliament may have great results. The German Liberals will doubt its good faith—they have too little confidence in its originator—but it is clear that revolution will try to make use of it to subvert what is already established and, after a general flare-up, to substitute unity under its own flag. I added that the Emperor could not depend on the sympathy of the unitarian party in Germany, and that M. de Bismarck's action, as treacherous as it is ill-considered, may lead to consequences strongly opposed to the interests of France and of its dynasty. Finally I enquired whether His Majesty did, or did not, approve of this new phase of Prussian conduct.

The Emperor replied that he was fully aware that M. de Bismarck had only decided to play this card as an endeavour to intimidate the secondary states and to detach them from ourselves. He has not concealed from Count Goltz that this game seems to him extremely dangerous, and that Prussia had better make sure of its success before going on with it. The result of this appeal to certain passions might turn against M. de Bismarck himself. Also the Emperor believed that the other German powers would resist energetically a manœuvre so highly dangerous to themselves. As for himself, he thought it would be unwise to abandon his reserve before seeing how things went.

I ventured to remark to His Majesty that if the French Government, in the face of a proposition which contains the germs of complications and revolutions and which may easily disturb the balance of Europe, if the French Government, I said, persisted in maintaining a strict neutrality, the small states would be paralysed in their resistance, since they would believe, no doubt wrongly, that France has agreed secretly to allow Prussia to establish her principles in Germany. The neutrality of a great Power such as France, in the face of constant fresh provocations from an ambitious Minister, produces upon those who wish to preserve peace and treaties an impression altogether contrary.

M. de Bismarck's real object was perfectly clear to the

Emperor ; he realized also that the means which he employed might prejudice French interests. Why then, I asked, does not His Majesty state plainly what he thinks of the Prussian Minister's motives and of his manœuvres ?

The Emperor replied : “ *Mon Dieu !* I tell you frankly that if I were to pronounce against the idea of universal suffrage and a central parliament, I should risk displeasing the Germans who might ask : ‘ What business is it of yours ? ’ and if into the bargain you should arrange a second convention with Prussia and reach a final agreement I should be left entirely alone to face a neighbouring and powerful nation that bears me a grudge, and also I should have contradicted the principles upon which my power rests.

“ Also I must confess that I do not see why I should take up my position on the treaties which form the basis of the Confederation. It does not seem to me that you yourselves have troubled much about them ; you cleared the limits of the Treaty of London at a single bound, and during the Danish war you were not particularly careful to interpret the federal articles conscientiously. Whilst you were on good terms with Prussia, and obeyed the counsels of this same M. de Bismarck, who omitted to treat the federal contingencies in a very Christian manner, you did not often glance in the direction of Frankfort. To-day you remember that you have confederates. I consider that you are right to make the most energetic use of the force which federal right gives you, but I do not see why I should assume this position when I am not yet sure that you will not end by embracing Prussia. Any sensible person will understand that I have no particular interest in seeing any hegemony whatsoever establish itself on my frontiers at the head of fifty million men of one and the same nationality, and that it can give me nothing but pleasure to see an energetic resistance opposed to the overthrow of the Confederation.”

I told the Emperor that it had never entered my head to ask him to maintain the federal institutions by his power before they were seriously threatened, but that I hoped he would support our efforts when the moment came. I added that it was very painful for me to notice that the French

people were much more sympathetic towards Austria's role, to the calm dignity of her resistance, than their Government. "There are moments, Sire," I added, "when the expression of friendly sympathy leaves a more grateful memory than the best-turned phrases spoken in ordinary times."

The Emperor replied, in the tone of emotion which he well knows how to assume, that his sympathies would certainly remain with us notwithstanding the prudence behind which his Government must shield itself in the present circumstances. "Your position is excellent," added the Emperor, "with energy and *savoir-faire* you will triumph over the crisis which concerns us all. I desire above all things that an *entente* between us, which might lead to the most important results, should follow closely upon these events. You will have won the greater part of Germany and you have little to fear from Italy, especially if you decide to use the powerful levers which you hold and which Prussia lacks."

Afterwards the Emperor repeated that he would abide firmly by his declaration that he would leave the Italians to attack us at their own risk and peril. He added that the Cabinet of Florence would probably be unable to restrain the Italians in case of war, but that our strong positions would relieve us of any fear of disaster from that side.

I conclude from my interview with the Emperor that he was speaking the truth. He will wait for the struggle to begin before he declares himself. Later, the comments of the Empress led me to believe that the Emperor wishes us to attack Prussia and neutralize Italy, by inspiring the hope of a possible agreement over Venetia. It is true that she never spoke the word, but she was burning with the desire to reopen the discussion on the subject which she considers the pivot of our future alliance. She insinuated that if we advanced boldly against Prussia, France would not delay to support us morally. I refused to be entirely reassured in this respect, and told her that we could not count on France's future sympathy until we had received the first proof of it.

* Count Goltz to Count Bismarck

Paris, 1st May, 1866.

During the court ball yesterday evening (30th April) the Emperor led me into a window-recess. He started by asking for the information which I had promised him. This I submitted in almost exactly the identical words which I had used when laying it before the Foreign Minister. I added that Congress might be unable to hold events any longer in check, now that Austria's foolish preparations for war had inspired Italy to similar action; and that our Government might find it impossible to allay the national enthusiasm which these actions had evoked.

The Emperor did not pursue the subject further. Instead, after impressing upon me the utmost secrecy, he proceeded to the following disclosure:

He has received from Austria information which sets the warlike tendency of events beyond a doubt, and which amount to a definite proposal for an agreement. He prefers a Prussian agreement to an Austrian one. I am well aware of his friendship for our King and his sympathy with Prussia. But he will be unable to reject Austria's proposals permanently, unless we offer equally acceptable terms. He considers that it is time that His Majesty the King made up his mind. At first he refused to agree when I suggested that this would be easier if the Emperor stated his objective. Later in the conversation he admitted that the eyes of France are directed towards the Rhine.

The Emperor again urged upon me the need of the greatest discretion; he said that no one, not even M. Benedetti, must be told of it. He authorized me to communicate the fact to Your Excellency, but at the same time to express the earnest wish that no one except the King must hear about it. I assured him that we treat his confidence as an affair of honour and that, whatever might result from it, we would preserve the strictest silence.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

1st May, 1866.

My impression is that the Emperor hopes that the war will be a short and decisive one, and that at the end of the

campaign peace may be restored. He is very sensitive on the subject of making any proposal which shall not be a successful one, and he thinks that until blood has flowed, neither side will be reasonable. He does not seem to object to Austria retaining Silesia if she can get it, vice Venetia, but he asks with reason, how can any proposal of the kind be made in congress with a chance of success. . . .

There are a real number of people who think that the Emperor is running public opinion here too fine, and that the material losses which war will create will not easily be forgotten or forgiven.

He must be a bold man who speculates upon the Emperor's intentions. I am quite sure that he has never revealed them to man, woman, or child, and I much doubt whether he knows them himself. As to an understanding with Bismarck, time alone can show, but I think time will give the lie to those who believe in it.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

7th May, 1866.

(Lord Cowley, and in fact everyone, had been startled by the Emperor's speech at Auxerre, and by the Emperor's repudiation of the treaties of 1815 : but there was apparently an explanation. In fact)

"I have no doubt in my own mind," wrote Lord Cowley, "that Thiers' speech has been the main cause of this overt act. I saw on Saturday how much the Emperor was annoyed by it, and had been warned not to say anything in its praise. It is just in the Emperor's character to say, 'I will show Thiers and the Chambers how little I care about them for they do not represent public opinion in France.'

"I could not make out on Saturday what was running in his mind, but he drew a comparison between the members residing in towns in France and the members representing the rural population, observing how much the stronger the latter were. You will see in the Auxerre speech a direct appeal to the rural population and what I have no doubt the Emperor was thinking of when he spoke to me was that he could not count upon support from the towns which are largely affected

by the speculation abroad into which France has been going ; but that the rural population, who are too poor to speculate, would answer to his appeal.

" What the Emperor really wants is the settlement of the Venetian question. He feels that if it is not settled before his death, he leaves his son seated, as he himself expresses it, on a barrel of gunpowder, and he is determined, or I am much mistaken, that it *shall be* settled now. How he hardly knows himself, but you may depend upon it that every effort—perhaps even war—will be made to effect it. The language of all the Italians who have access to the Tuileries is : " We shall have Venetia now by fair means or foul," and after Thiers' speech on Thursday, the Emperor wrote to Nigra to tell him not to mind the temper of the Chambers, *that it altered nothing.*

All the peace party are in despair. Drouyn, Vaillant and Co. rule triumphant, and my only hope is that, when it comes to the point, the two great German Powers will recoil from making France mistress of their destinies, which she will become if they mutually destroy each other.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

8th May, 1866.

The Emperor began his conversation with me last night by asking whether I had any news from London, and I thought that I might say without inconvenience that His Majesty's refusal to join in a remonstrance had caused the greatest disappointment in England, and to nobody more than to the Queen. It was then that he told me that he should probably have something to say to me in a day or two. To others he has been more explicit. He told Rothschild last night that he thought peace would be preserved by means of a congress—that much would depend upon the English Government ; and Lavalette and Fould have both told me that he is confident of the success of a Congress, though on what basis or with what view, both profess themselves to be ignorant. . . .

To return to the Emperor's speech, Fould saw His Majesty this morning, and if his account of the conversation is

correct, he told his master some home truths. Indeed, he represents himself as having said that His Majesty was marching to his own ruin, and to that of France, that his encouragement of an alliance between Italy and Prussia was madness, that the confidence of the country was gone—and that his speech at Auxerre was an insult to his Ministers and to the Chambers—that he had demeaned himself by replying to Thiers, etc., etc. If everybody would speak this language some good might be done, but I was disgusted yesterday evening with the fawning flattery of many who I knew blamed in their hearts what had been done, and yet made the most complimentary speeches to the Great Man, who, by the way, I never saw in better spirits.

* *Count Goltz to Count Bismarck*

Confidential. By Hand.

Paris, 8th May, 1866.

Although the shooting expedition made me three-quarters of an hour late for last night's Court ball at the Tuileries, a rapid glance at your esteemed despatch was sufficient to convince me that it would be impossible to utilize its contents in conversation with the Emperor that same evening, since it demanded careful study and consideration. Accordingly I asked the Emperor to receive me the following day, and to this he agreed willingly.

I have already telegraphed to Your Excellency the main points of the Emperor's conversation to-day. These show a complete and most agreeable change from the views which I reported a week ago. In reply to Your Excellency's esteemed despatch and private letter of the 6th inst., I have the honour to explain in detail the reasons for this change, which enables me to revert to my original standpoint.

I began by telling the Emperor that I had informed Your Excellency, in strict confidence, of the information he gave me at the last Court ball but one. After a preliminary acknowledgment, which I have received already, it was probable that His Majesty the King would supplement his last letter by a written explanation of his views; since the Emperor considered that the time was now ripe for a

complete agreement, which had not been the case previously. But in order that this further exchange of ideas might effect a genuine *rapprochement*, I thought it would be wise to establish definitely the points on which agreement had been reached, and those on which opinion still differed. I had not been commissioned to lay the question before the Emperor. But perhaps His Majesty would allow me to state my private doubts, so that I might be in a position to inform my Government, if need arose.

With the Emperor's consent I told him that my doubts were twofold. They concerned firstly what the Emperor might require for France ; and secondly what Austria might offer, or had offered, to him. As to the first, I could not conceal the utmost anxiety concerning any severance of Prussian or German territory that might be claimed. Here the Emperor interrupted with the remark that his statements of a week ago had been made under the impression that war was imminent. He had esteemed it his duty to draw our attention to the trend of popular opinion. In the contingency of Prussian extension, the French populace required "something on the banks of the Rhine, in the direction of the Moselle and Rhenish Bavaria" (practically the boundaries of 1814). His personal wishes did not lie in that direction. He wished to avoid the necessity for an accession of territory that might be accompanied by drawbacks. Was he even sure that the population was willing to become French ? Consequently he was anxious to avoid any adventures which might kindle a European conflagration. For this purpose it was advisable to restrict ourselves to the burning questions which at the present moment were threatening to produce a great war ; to submit these questions to a Congress, and to exclude all other matters from consultation. These urgent matters are : Venetia, Schleswig-Holstein, and the German question. He would like to see Venetia united with Italy ; the Elbe Duchies (with the exception of the northern district given to Denmark) united with Prussia ; and the hegemony of the latter state established in Northern Germany, whilst the remaining German States were allowed to form a union amongst themselves. In return

for all this he demanded (he repeated this in answer to my question with the strongest emphasis), absolutely nothing for himself. Only he doubted whether the remaining Powers—to whom naturally the programme, which must be discussed between France, Prussia, and Italy only, could not be divulged—would consent to convene a Congress which should solve these three problems.

I expressed my lively satisfaction at the Emperor's attitude. I told him that, according to my own conviction, he was serving not only our interests but also his own by refusing to annex Prussian territory. I thought it superfluous to talk about the left bank of the Rhine ; since it was obvious that, though France might win it in a great European War, no Prussian King would ever renounce it voluntarily. I did not apply the same unconditionally to the small tracts of land which were left to France in 1814, but were joined to Prussia in 1815. It might be claimed that, if this act of retrocession was intended to form a constituent part of the complete restoration of the 1814 boundaries, and if the population consented, such a change would be justifiable. But it is essential to realize what such decisions entail, and the natural resentment with which a population learns from their present Sovereign that he wishes to be rid of them. We had already received unprovoked manifestations to the contrary : manifestations entirely disconnected from 1814 events. But it seemed to me that such a gain would prove an even more doubtful advantage to the Emperor. He would be entering into direct conflict with his own principles of nationalities and obedience to the will of the people ; he would reawaken to the fullest extent the national antipathy of Germany which he has so cleverly allayed, and would give her an objective which she has lacked hitherto. If he weighed carefully all the inconveniences it would cost him to extend the French boundaries to the Rhine and to gain thereby several million subjects, he would realize the fact. He might be strong enough to overcome the dangers attendant on the acquisition for a time. But it was quite impossible that he should renounce all the foundations of his present policy for the sake of a few hundred thousand souls.

The Emperor agreed with most of my words and did not attempt to contradict them. Next I proceeded to explain the motives for my agreement with the views he had expressed. It seemed unnecessary to do more than draw his attention to the fact that it would be exceedingly difficult to restrict the deliberations of the Congress to the three questions specified. Also I suggested another subordinate reservation with regard to the German question.

In the first place, I told the Emperor, it would be impossible for us to insist absolutely that Austria must surrender Venetia to Italy, hand over Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia, and renounce her present position in Germany without receiving any compensation. When the Emperor agreed, I added that it puzzled me where these compensations were to be found. In the eventuality of a war between the two great German Powers I had found it quite easy to decide what Austria should give France, but not what France should give if the positions were reversed. France would certainly not consent to leave Venetia in Austrian hands ; Austria would refuse to surrender Venetia except from the most dire necessity. Austria could not wish to repeat the comedy of 1863 with Poland, in whose sincerity the Emperor was not likely to trust a second time.

The Emperor replied that Polish affairs had not entered into the present discussion and he did not intend to mix himself up with them again. Also the problem must be excluded from the Congress, or it would prove a bar against Russia's participation. Also Austria would not desire the Danube Principalities, since Russia would unquestionably go to war about them. What Austria required as compensation for Venetia is perfectly clear, he says, though he begs me to keep it a profound secret. She wants Silesia, to which naturally he would not consent. When I interposed that any disintegration of Prussia would secure supremacy in Germany for Austria, on the lines of the former German Empire, and that this to a large degree would prejudice France's interests, the Emperor acquiesced. Then he observed that Bosnia and Herzegovina were the only compensations he could suggest for Austria in exchange for Venetia. This

would provide the Dalmatian coast-line with a hinterland which would enable Austria to defend it against Italian attacks. He asked what Russia would say about it. I said that she would certainly seek compensation through some mitigation of the shipping restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Paris in the Black Sea or by the recovery of a part of Bessarabia. With regard to England the Emperor pointed to her strong disinclination to tamper with the Peace of Paris. I added that any strengthening of Serbia might cause Russia to agree to the relinquishment of a part of Bosnia to Austria.

As to the German question I drew the Emperor's notice to the opposition which a plan for a European Congress would encounter in Germany ; but that this might be reduced if the Congress restricted itself to the sanction of the general principles established to preserve the balance of Europe. The Emperor objected that, since the German Confederation formed a constituent part of European treaties, therefore the European Powers could not be denied the right to veto any change of its organization having an effect on its Foreign relations. I replied that in almost every State reforms were conceivable which would strengthen its position towards other countries ; but that this did not give foreigners a right to intervene. As regards Germany it was impossible to establish any hard and fast rule. For example, no outside force could possibly intervene against a military convention between Prussia and Coburg. On the other hand it would be difficult to maintain that other Powers would not be concerned if the King of Prussia were to assume unconditional control of the whole German means of defence. There are many shades of difference between these two extremes. What I considered essential was that Germany should be allowed to carry out her own internal work without interference, and that Congress should only map out certain boundaries for her, which we must afterwards discuss with France. The Emperor professed approval, and repeated that he raised no objection to the hegemony in North Germany and the individual grouping of the South German States. It was a matter of complete indifference to him whether in the end Germany possessed two or three parliaments.

Your Excellency will perceive from what I have written the extraordinary change in the Emperor's views and inclinations. A fortnight ago, I may say it plainly, he abandoned his trust in war and begged for a Congress. A week ago he considered war was inevitable and announced his extensive claims. To-day he has renounced these entirely. He has returned to the earlier stage of our negotiations ; he is ready, without any war, to help ourselves and Italy to secure all that we want by means of a Congress. Yes, I can follow this transformation further still. After the session of the Legislative Assembly the mere mention of Auxerre angered him. To-day the reaction, as I will explain later, was clearly discernible in his words. The day before yesterday M. Drouyn de Lhuys announced the Congress as a sheer manœuvre. To-day the Emperor is seriously engaged in arranging it.

I believe that in all this the Emperor was sincere ; more sincere perhaps than he has ever been before, and that his shifting standpoint is explained by the quick and frequent changes in the situation.

In my report of yesterday I mentioned the two opposite views which, according to M. Drouyn de Lhuys, are prevalent in Paris : that which desires peace at any price, and that which dreams of conquest in case peace proves impossible and Prussia increases her territory. A week ago the Emperor, who always sets a high value on public opinion, had appropriated the latter view ; to-day he has espoused the opposite opinion which appeals to the majority. His speech at Auxerre, which was more like a rebuke to the Legislative Assembly than a new definitely-planned programme of present policy, made a bad impression upon everyone : the pride of the servile majority was wounded, and they threatened a counter demonstration which would have obliged the Emperor to dissolve the Assembly. Several of the more important Ministers (Rouher, Fould, Béhic) wished to tender their resignations ; and the funds on yesterday's Bourse dropped phenomenally. Meanwhile Thiers is condemned by all the Liberal newspapers. The Emperor has taken all this into consideration. The result

is highly favourable to ourselves, and I consider it most important to take advantage of it before another change occurs. Our preparations for war must on no account be interrupted. In my opinion they should be continued until the first session of the eventual Congress orders general disarmament, which should then be carried out honourably by all parties. It is equally important that negotiations with Austria should not be broken off. The more closely we can approach one another, the more favourable will be our position before the Congress. If Austria refuses to send delegates, and the Emperor thinks this likely, she will be condemned unanimously as the peace-breaker. For the moment I cannot see that a letter from the King would help matters. In the end I should be obliged to deliver it to the Emperor, in strict privacy.

It only remains for me to reply briefly and categorically to any of your questions which remain unanswered.

I definitely negative the idea that the Emperor's statements were intended to place pressure upon us in favour of peace. He was far more anxious to secure the fruits of the war, in which he firmly believed and, at that time, desired. At the same time he was trying to appear more loyal than he really was. That was why he did not await the declaration of war. Austria's offer really appealed to him very little : but it was of great value so long as we had made him no offer and he had nothing much to hope from us.

I only quoted in my recent postscript the words¹ with which the Emperor is said to have vindicated his policy to several deputies, who were urging him to force us to conclude peace, because they paint the picture so vividly and characteristically. I cannot produce any reliable witnesses. The saying passed from mouth to mouth, and it seemed very credible. For I could report innumerable sayings concerning the Emperor's views : sayings which are told me daily by influential men wholly devoted to the Empire, and some of them by Imperial Ministers. I have excellent reason to believe that, in direct contradiction to what was said earlier,

¹ "What would you say if I gave you the Rhine without a single shot?" Oncken, vol. i, 76, p. 153.

Rouher at first was very eager for peace; but recently he has urged the extension of France at the expense of Prussia. The same applies to most of the Ministers, especially the Minister of War. The prevalent opinion, and one which has caused me considerable anxiety, is that the Emperor would be forced to yield to them.

I must state in conclusion that the Emperor's remarks were neither confidential nor spoken at random. The Emperor has known my opinion about the severance of territory for a long time. All his statements were made with a certain solemnity and were obviously the fruit of mature consideration. Except for the unusual cordiality of the Emperor's tone, they gave me the impression of an ultimatum. Drouyn de Lhuys spoke several times in much the same manner. The Italians have sought to make a similar impression.

We may hope that this incident is now closed, and is not likely to be reopened. But I thought Your Excellency might be interested in its details.

Postscript (in his own handwriting).

The Minister also told me that the present state of suspense is worse for all national interests than war itself.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

11th May, 1865.

The Emperor said that since he had last seen me, he had had an interview with both Goltz and Metternich, and that he thought that he had brought them both round to his views that a Congress was the safest measure for both of them to adopt.

He then told me that Metternich had offered in the name of his Government to cede Venetia to France if the Emperor would guarantee his own neutrality, and that of Italy; the cession to be made on the signature of peace with Prussia, it being understood that if circumstances should be favourable, Austria might take compensation in Germany—in other words, if Austria was secured on the side of Italy, she would fall upon Prussia, take from her Silesia if they could, and keep it in compensation for Venetia ceded to France. The

Emperor told Metternich that, if this proposal had been made a month ago, he would have listened to it. At present Italy had completely escaped from his control, and he could give no guarantee as to what she might do.

The Emperor went on to say that he told Metternich fairly that he could not even engage that the neutrality which he promised could be long observed. In a word, from what the Emperor said to me, I have not the slightest doubt that were Italy to attack Austria and meet with a reverse, France would go to her support. . . .

The Emperor spoke to me plainly about the doings at Auxerre, telling me plainly that it was his sole intention to reprove the unpatriotic language of Thiers. I took the opportunity, as I did also yesterday with Drouyn, to hint that I knew of no question which would really produce a rupture between the two countries except an attempt to annex Belgium, and that this always made us susceptible, to hear the treaties of 1815 spoken of slightly.

* *Prince Metternich to Count Mensdorff*

Paris, 16th May, 1866.

The Emperor continues to mystify each and all by his sphinxlike attitude. He seems like an augur who resists the encroachments of the inquisitive populace by saying : "Keep calm ! I know what is going to happen, and you will be satisfied."

To the most concise, the most logical arguments, he answers nothing. He sticks to his original theme : "Liberty of action."

If you say to him : "After all, if you want peace, you have only to say a word to Italy and a word to Prussia, and order will be restored," his manner suggests the answer : "But peace is exactly what I do not want."

If you insinuate that by allying himself with Italy and with Prussia he might recover the Rhine, he answers : "I am not troubling about the Rhine."

If I whisper in his ear : "Keep Italy quiet and it is more than likely that you will have Venetia," he replies : "I have no influence in Florence nowadays."

I believe that the fact is that, in Florence as in Berlin, in Vienna as in Paris, everyone distrusts him without knowing why, and tries to bribe him without knowing how !

M. Thiers' speech has made him abandon his reserve for the moment. It annoys him profoundly—chiefly on account of the truth it contains. It is strange, but the speech at Auxerre which caused such a stir in Paris—to-day no one remembers it and if the Emperor wished it forgotten, he has succeeded perfectly.

Will the first shot bring the Emperor down from the clouds ?

Only one fact is clear, all the bigwigs of the Empire are wasting their energy.

Each believes that he has discovered something and is astounded when his colleagues maintains that he has discovered the exact opposite.

It is not only to myself that the Emperor has spoken of his lost influence in Italy. He has certified it still more explicitly to Lord Cowley, who states that the Emperor actually did telegraph to Florence to keep calm and that the only effect was to accelerate armament.

Statesmen and the subsidized Press vie with one another in quibbling.

When I said to him lately : " Sire, I am accustomed to believe you for hitherto you have always told me the truth, but I think you will find it very difficult to make other people believe you," the Emperor replied : " I quite understand it." It was as though he added : " It's all the same to me. I can do nothing ! "

Some time ago, after I had pointed out how little Italy has to lose from any combinations of congress or from an *entente* between us, I said : " Sire, I hope that you will help us in the last act, to the advantage of Italy." The Emperor laughed and answered : " Yes certainly—if there is any advantage."

I said in my last report, it seems as though the Emperor has decided to radiate at home and abroad a feeling less honourable than lucrative, according to events : " General mistrust."

* *Prince Metternich to Count Mensdorff*

Paris, 21st May, 1866.

During the last few days I have been moving heaven and earth to find a basis on which we might reach an agreement with France, and I have arrived at the conviction that nothing short of the guns can bring us together. According to my opinion a vigorous initiative on the grounds of federal rights is the means either to make Prussia withdraw or to oblige her to take up arms. At the same time it is our only chance of carrying with us our confederates who, unless we display an increasingly resolute attitude, might easily be persuaded to a hesitancy which would be dangerous to the future.

I have done and said here all that it is in my power to say and do.

As I wired to you yesterday, the Emperor cannot escape from this dilemma : "I have only a single interest in the whole matter, that is to finish with the Italian question by the cession of Venice. If this cession can effect peace, I will do all that I can to contribute to it, if not, I will profit by the opportunities which a war between Austria and Prussia may offer in this respect."

This is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. All the phrases which encompass this question signify nothing. When they tell me at the Tuileries that they will support us if we advance, I only attach a trivial importance to their words. When they try to entice us into a Congress by grandiloquent phrases on the justice and equity of a compensation entire and worthy of our power, I decline, saying : "I whispered that to you about Venetia—You answered : 'That's all very well, but we cannot bind ourselves,' and now you make a European question of it—That is the fact, that is what we resent on your part, and what we shall never forget."

The question is : Can we advance without regard to France and Italy ? Or have we reason to fear that we may find the French battalions enrolled against us ?

In soul and conscience I reply : We must advance step by step, but vigorously, within the limits of federal right, lest our hesitation damage our position. We must try and

persuade France to abandon her enigmatical neutrality in our favour, and not allow national sentiment to cool in Germany, which will become more enthusiastic in proportion as it believes us to be free from all engagements with France.

At the same time the prospect of our advance in order to win a compensation for Venetia will bring us closer to a *rapprochement* here; and if the Italians attack us, we shall have a chance of seeing the sentimental policy which favours Italy replaced by the hope of a definite and equitable settlement in the peninsula. If, at a given moment, France opposed itself to our success, we should still have time and prudence to avoid war, or to retreat into Italy before a crushing coalition.

One of these days the Congress, or rather the conferences of Paris, will seize us by the throat. Ought we to repulse them from the start?

This is what I should like: That we should accept a conference in principle without agreeing upon the points of discussion in advance, on the understanding that we can make our proposals at the first session. On the appointed day you would come here and between us we should take our stand on the principle that we demand the *status quo*; this would imply that none of the Powers should claim any increase of territory. As for the Duchies of the Elbe, we should claim for the populations the right to settle their fate for themselves by a regular vote in the Diet. In the meantime our respective troops would evacuate their territory. If they ask for Venetia, we will answer that we will defend it against all comers unless we receive the only compensation that our military and national honour permits us to accept—that is to say, Silesia. Finally, while declaring that the question of federal reform is a purely Germanic concern, but that we are anxious to reassure those governments that have questioned our intentions about it, we will assert that the preceding conditions are the last to which we shall agree.

By these conditions we should thrust Prussia back on her last line, and we should make her responsible for the failure of the Utopian task for which we were invited.

At the same time, and I insist upon this, you will be able

to give your own account of the situation, and this under present circumstances, I consider of the *utmost importance*.

I enclose a note which Drouyn de Luhys has sent me indirectly, by hand of M. de Banneville.

You will find in it all the insinuations with which I am pestered continuously with regard to the Congress.

Lord Cowley, M. de Bourqueney, and others besiege me with letters, conjuring me not to take the responsibility of wrecking the Congress.

I confess that these move me very little ; all that I desire to-day is that the voice of the guns should silence the voices of the sirens which surround me, obsess me, unnerve me.

One word in conclusion.

The Empress, who has shown me marks of genuine affection and of sincere compassion for my difficult situation and for the responsibility which weighs upon me, said to me yesterday : "Do you not see that the Emperor is irrevocably bound to neutrality until the first shot is fired ?"

"Indeed I do," I replied, "but who can say that he is not equally bound for the duration of the war ?"

"This is one of the moments," she replied, "when one must act logically. When I tell you to advance, I am not leading you into a trap. Show greater energy than you have shown hitherto ; I know that boldness is not your characteristic, if this is not at fault as in 1859—but everything combines to tell you, as I do : Advance, advance !"

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

22nd May, 1866.

I had some conversation last night with the Emperor at the Tuilleries on the present state of affairs. He expressed pleasure at the understanding which existed between the two Governments at this crisis, and asked what I thought of the chance of a Conference. I told him I was afraid from all that I heard that the Austrian Government would make, to say the least, great objections to accepting such an interview as we had agreed upon and that if His Majesty was really desirous that a Conference should meet with any chance of a successful result, he must, in my opinion, do two things.

1. Facilitate the arrival of Austria by an invitation *moins dure*.
2. Invite the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and not their representatives to take part in the Conference and occasionally preside over it himself.

He asked whether anything of the kind had ever been done before and I replied that that was of no consequence, that he would have the opportunity of showing how much he desired peace and that it would do him real good. He seemed much struck with the idea, and said he would reflect over it. With regard to giving facilities to Austria, he was quite of opinion that it should be done.

(On 27th May Lord Cowley wrote at length to Lord Clarendon saying that he hoped the Foreign Ministers would themselves come to a Conference and that Clarendon would set them the example. "Goltz," he added, "declares that Bismarck will not come. I believe that Bismarck is rather afraid of the *pommes cuites* with which he might be received there. As for the Emperor he is evidently quite at sea as to what can be done," wrote Lord Cowley, "but I fear is quite determined that somehow or other there shall be an end of the Venetian question. This again is to my mind an additional reason why you should come, for you may be able to control his future movements and bind him to neutrality.")

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

29th May, 1866.

The Empress told me last night that she wanted to enlist my sympathies in a question in which she warned me she had already a majority. I said that if that was the case, there was no use in applying to me. She replied that an adverse minority was sometimes able to defy the wishes of a majority. Briefly—after beating about the bush for five minutes—it came out that she wanted Spain to take part in the Conferences. I objected that Spain could hardly do so unless Sweden and Portugal, who were equally parties to the Treaties of Vienna, were also asked. Upon which she exclaimed that she was interesting herself for Spain, not in

virtue of the Treaty of Vienna, but as a great Power, which ought to take her place in the councils of Europe.

I asked then why had not the Emperor invited her, as he had the others ? The idea of a congress had come from His Majesty, and he might have proposed Spain to take part in it. All this passed very good-humouredly, and rather in a bantering tone . . . she saying by the way that the idea was her own, and did not come from the Spanish Government.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

4th June, 1866.

Why the Emperor sent for me I cannot exactly say. It was more like old times when he used to summon me upon every occasion of difficulty. He asked me what Her Majesty's Government would say to the conduct of Austria, and as I had put your correspondence with Apponyi into my pocket, I gave it to him to read and he expressed himself as highly satisfied with the identity of views between the two Governments. He spoke with great regret of the failure of the Conference which he had hoped himself might have led to some arrangement. He had been quite prepared, he said, for the refusal of Austria to cede Venetia, but that he had hoped she would have waited to say so in Paris, and that the compensation to which (he admitted) she was justly entitled, might have been treated *dans les coulisses*. He spoke without the least apparent acrimony against Austria, and seemed convinced that she will eventually give up Venetia. I told him that I thought so too, that she would probably on the first provocation fall upon Prussia, and if she obtained any advantage would then be found willing to treat again. The conversation continued for some time as to the chances of Austria's success, the Emperor, I think, inclining to the opinion that she would lick the Prussians.

He then talked about his own position which he said was very difficult. The uncertainty of war would, he feared, entail great losses on France, and he really did not know what to do. What would I advise ? I said that in my humble opinion His Majesty could not do better than persist in the attitude of neutrality which he had assumed, and should

The Emperor's break can be made to use his good offices for the preservation of peace, whenever an opportunity might offer. He said that such was his intention. I asked him whether he had any intention of going to the assistance of Italy. He replied positively not, that there would be no justification for him to do so. That seven years ago the case was different but that he believed himself that Austria had no objection whatever with regard to Italy since the war of 1859.

But he admitted that he feared there would be considerable excitement in the French camp, and that he will be obliged to stop the general. But then we have to call to mind—
Austria, Prussia, or Italy.

I do not think it would be prudent to build too much on what the Emperor now says. He is in a state of perplexity and it will be some days before one can know exactly what he means. In present I should say he tends to keep clear of the entanglement.

Last Chapter to Mr. O. E. Powell

5th June, 1856.

The Emperor maintains his intention of abandoning Pomerania at the end of the year.

* Prince Metternich to Count Merveldt

Pots., 5th June, 1856.

On Sunday morning, 3d June, the ordinary Staff brought me the despatches which Your Excellency did me the honor to address to me on the 1st June.

Learning that Mr. Dreyfus de Lavaux was away, presiding over an additional committee in the country, I asked an audience of the Emperor. His Majesty summoned me at once to his study. I went there immediately, taking with me the despatches that I had just received. The Emperor received me in his study, and said: "You bring me bad news, I suppose?" "Sir," I replied, "I bring you what I have always anticipated, that is to say, a request for a guarantee in what concerns our rights, a guarantee which Your Majesty has refused to grant us, even confidentially. But before discussing this matter," I added, "I will ask

Your Majesty's 'patience to read, or to listen while I read, the papers that I have brought.'

The Emperor took despatch No. 1, read it slowly and with much attention, handed it back to me, and said : " I consider this despatch equivalent to a refusal ; for it is evident that, if there is to be no question of territorial revisions intended to prevent the recurrence of the war, the meeting of the conferences would be superfluous. I am sorry that you have decided not to come and defend your cause, which is a very just one."

" The reserves which we make," I replied, " should not prevent a meeting which we do not decline ; but which in our opinion should adopt, as the basis of its deliberations, a respect which alone can lead to a solution. Let them grant us assurances that they will not admit the justice of an illegal claim, for example, the annexation of Venetia to Italy. Let them seek to conciliate the ambitions of the one with the incontestable rights of the other by guaranteeing to these latter that only principles of equity and justice will preside at the common deliberations, and we will come at once. But if, as I have often told Your Majesty, they only invite us in order to urge upon us, and force us to make, concessions to peace which are incompatible with our honour, it is much better that we should refuse to permit a conference. We should only be obliged to take a back seat from the very first and to send Prince Gortschakoff back to St. Petersburg and Lord Clarendon to London, without any result.

" I have always told you," replied the Emperor, " that in my opinion the real condition of peace lies in the discovery of a means of compensating, in a manner equitable to Austria, the cession of Venetia, a cession which, to my mind, is the pivot on which the deliberations turn. I tell you frankly I was prepared to exert all my energies in this direction, and I would have supported very loyally and very firmly the question of compensation for yourselves. I would have proposed that Prussia should cede to you a great part of Silesia, with permission to indemnify herself in the North of Germany ; and I would have supported any extension of Austria on the East."

At these words I permitted myself to interrupt the Emperor, saying :—

“ Then, Sire, I am glad of what has happened. We should certainly have refused any compensation in the East, and if Your Majesty had tried to influence us in that direction we should have quarrelled. Your Majesty has seen our official reply to the invitation which we have received. These are the explanations which we give of our conduct. They are intended to regulate the statements of the representatives of Austria at the three Courts ; but I think it best that Your Majesty should read them all, though you will find some passages which were not intended for you.”

I gave the Emperor confidential despatch No. 2. His Majesty read it and said :—

“ This is clearer ; this is frank, and I do not say that you are altogether wrong—let me see the rest.”

I noticed that the Emperor’s curiosity increased in proportion to what he read—I handed him No. 3, saying :—

“ This, Sire, contains very secret matter, intended to be delivered by word of mouth and to Your Majesty only.”

After the Emperor had read this paper he said :—

“ The beginning is excellent ; unfortunately the end spoils everything, for it bars the door against any secret *entente* between us. What have you still ? ”

“ A despatch, Sire, which answers the last communications which I made to Vienna, and which testifies to my discouragement concerning the possibility of an *entente* with Your Majesty.”

The Emperor took it and read despatch No. 5 twice.

When he returned it the Emperor asked what was the result of it all.

I took a paper from my pocket on which I had scribbled hastily the little note of which Your Excellency has received a copy to-day, together with the letter which I sent you by M. de Gramont.

I told the Emperor : “ This, Sire, is what I had hoped to arrange with the information which Your Majesty now possesses. I think it is the utmost limit of our concessions.”

After the Emperor had read it he said : “ This is good,

because it gives me confidence ; but it is not all. In the face of events which will soon happen it is necessary for my personal guidance that we should discuss together and frankly the Venetian question, without the solution of which, at least in perspective, we cannot reach an agreement."

The Emperor opened a small drawer in his table and said :

" Here is a little scheme, very short and very simple, which I submit to you."

His Majesty made me read the points which are already known to Your Excellency at the moment when I am writing.

The discussion, to which this proposal led, lasted a long time ; the possibility of some such arrangement, contested by me and defended by the Emperor, was the burden of it.

I expressed the conclusion at which I arrived in the following terms :—

" By promising an absolute neutrality, even in Italy, Your Majesty is certainly rendering us a great service ; by making it dependent on a condition so severe as the cession of Venetia at the end of the war, whatever its result may be, Your Majesty is putting a knife to our throat. But at least we shall know where we are, and that is a fact which Your Majesty has long concealed from us."

I spoke of the advantage which French neutrality had been to Prussia and Italy, as without it M. de Bismarck would not have dared to advance as he has done, to expose his frontiers on the west and to mass against us the troops with which he hopes to crush us ; whilst on the other hand the Government of Florence would not have ventured to utter shouts of war, whose pretext is so glaringly opposed to the rights of others.

Taking as my text a newspaper passage which referred to the theory of neutrality, I told the Emperor : " Your neutrality, Sire, has been the ally of violence."

The Emperor owned it frankly and without reservation, and made me the following confidences which deserve notice.

" I confess," said His Majesty, " that I have coquetted with Prussia, and I will state my reasons quite openly.

" In the first place, although I esteem and honour the Emperor of Austria in the highest degree, I have never had

any intimate relations with him, except at a moment painful to him and very embarrassing to myself, and I have received scarcely any proofs of his personal friendship. On the contrary, the King of Prussia came to Compiègne and has always shown the most kindly feeling towards me. This was one reason why I did not wish to appear hostile to his petty ambitions. But that is not all—I allowed Prussia to advance, saying to myself that once they were sure of me they would use me a *bridge of gold*. *The provinces of the Rhine in distant perspective made me hesitate a long time over my choice.* To-day I have completely abandoned any idea of this kind, and having made the sacrifice I tell myself that I have nothing to gain from an agreement with Austria.

"I am unwilling to make war, and it is to avoid this of necessity that I tell you openly on what conditions *I should be able not to make it.*

"If I could be sure that I should one day have Venetia, and if I could sleep peacefully knowing that you would not interfere with the honourable purpose of the French Army and of the entire nation to obliterate the results of the war of '59, I ask nothing better than that you should defeat the Italians if they attack you; and if, in consequence of your victory, movements occur in Italy (such as I foresee), movements which will lead to changes which may overthrow Italian unity, I shall not object.

"If you accept what I propose nothing need set us at variance. If you think it your duty to refuse *I shall be forced to arm in my turn and to intervene eventually.*"

This was the end of our political conversation—from this moment our talk became more intimate and the Emperor addressed to me personally words of regret which caused me many pangs—he became what he can be on occasion, kind, confidential, and very friendly. When taking leave of me the Emperor said that he would entrust his proposal to M. de Gramont, and he asked me to give him my parole not to advise Your Excellency of the tenour of his conditions until the Duke arrived in Vienna; on the pretext that confidential affairs of this kind should not be left in suspense for more than a few hours.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

16th June, 1866.

I was received by the Emperor this afternoon. After giving him the Queen's message for which he expressed his gratitude, he asked me what you thought of his letter. I said that when I left England you had not seen it : but only knew the general contents of it as given by the telegraph. I thought I might add from myself that there were parts of it, such, for instance, as His Majesty's determination to observe a strict neutrality and his declaration of wanting nothing for France, which must give great satisfaction. The Emperor observed that his intentions had been misapprehended by many. His letter had been considered a prelude to war, whereas there were but two eventualities and neither in his opinion likely to happen, which could possibly bring him into the field ; the one, if either of the Great German Powers should attempt to establish a united Germany under one Crown, the other if Austria should endeavour to destroy the work which had been accomplished in Italy.

With regard to Germany the Emperor said that the war about to commence would probably produce considerable changes, in which some of the smaller Sovereigns would inevitably go to the wall. He had no desire to prevent this. Talking of Prussia he said that anybody looking on the map of Europe must see that her frontier had not common sense, that part of her provinces were separated from the capitals, and that her territory required readjustment. He should not consider himself called upon to make a war to prevent this. I hinted that the ambition of Prussia might lead her to try and annex the whole of Northern Germany. He said that if she took too much there she must be prepared to give up something elsewhere, meaning, I suppose, the Rhine Provinces.

Later, indeed, in the conversation he remarked that there had been a plan put forward at the Congress of Vienna which would have been much more agreeable to France than the arrangement actually made, viz. that Prussia should have Saxony and the King of Saxony the Rhenish Provinces. With respect to Austria, the Emperor said that he should not

object to her retaining Silesia, could she win it, or to any other arrangement in Germany which might suit her. But, said His Majesty, it is useless speculating on these matters where so much must depend on the chances of war and the duration of it.

On the subject of Italy His Majesty seems pretty well satisfied that the Austrians will act entirely on the defensive and will be ready to cede Venetia when the war is over. He seems to dread Garibaldi and his volunteers and the trouble that they may prove hereafter.

I asked His Majesty whether there was any truth in the report that he wished to separate Naples from Northern Italy. He assured me most positively that it was not so, that he had been sounded on the subject by Austria, who desired it, and that he had replied that he could only consent to it if it was the undoubted wish of the Neapolitans themselves. I observed that Austria was suspected of a desire to place the Grand Duke of Tuscany there. The Emperor replied that he had never heard of it. On the contrary, he replied that the Emperor Francis Joseph's desire was to find an asylum for the Grand Duke in Germany, "and that," said His Majesty, "is the affair of Austria not mine."

On the whole, I think that the Emperor is quite resolved not to stir from his neutral position—that he is prepared to see and to admit great territorial changes in Germany in the process of which some of the minor Sovereigns will disappear, and perhaps, though he gives no hint of it, he hopes to profit in the general *remaniement*. If more than persuasion is wanted to induce Austria to cede Venetia probably the more will be applied. I cannot say more at the present moment.

I had a long conversation with Lavalette this morning, who perhaps knows more of the Emperor's intentions than anybody, and he is quite persuaded that His Majesty means peace at present. Of course, the course of the war may greatly modify His Majesty's views.

The Emperor then talked about the Principalities, but said nothing that I had not heard before. He defended himself from being the author of the solution of Prince Charles, though he now wished him success. I said that Her Majesty's

Government were doing what was in their power to induce the Cortes to recognize Prince Charles, but that on the other hand they could not forget their obligations to the Porte or the guarantees which in common with the Great Powers they had given. There was no denying the Porte's rights. The best course to take, therefore, was to endeavour to obtain some compromise of the Sultan.

The Emperor said that he was quite of that opinion, but he feared hostilities on the part of the Porte and that the flames of war might then be lighted throughout the East. I replied no doubt there was danger of the kind, and we must continue to preach prudence and moderation to the Porte—but this preaching could only be effective if we were just to the Porte in the advice we gave.

I gave your message to the Emperor, for which he desired me to thank you very much and to assure you of the pleasure it would have given him to have seen you here. He added that he was very glad to perceive that Her Majesty's Government appeared much stronger.

* *Prince Metternich to Count Mensdorff*

Paris, 29th June, 1866.

Confidential.

I have handed the Emperor Napoleon the letter which our august Master addressed to him on the 24th of this month.

After the Emperor had read it he gave it to me to study ; then he said : " I find this letter very good and noble—I cannot complain of hostility to the Diet and in my letter I only wished to allude to the date of its inauguration."

Afterwards he spoke to me of the accomplished ratification of the Convention. In this connection he told me that the secret which had been partly divulged by petty indiscretions, mainly due to the family of the Duc de Gramont, was again maintained.

" As it always happens," added His Majesty, " such things are forgotten and to-day no one troubles about them."

His Majesty told me later what Prince Napoleon had just been saying to him, in his fury at seeing him remain inactive

and thus contributing, without moving a finger, to the defeat of Italy. The Emperor's cousin reproved him for his non-interference, adding : " I know that you are counting on the promises of Austria, but eventually you will be forced to intervene, and then instead of two live and vigorous allies you will find only a pair of wrecks beside you."

I permitted myself to draw the Emperor's attention to the feeling of distrust which continues to make headway against him both in German and in Austrian public opinion.

The Emperor replied that he was quite aware of it ; he insisted that his letter to Drouyn de Lhuys has been wrongly interpreted, and that this mistrust can only be removed by slow degrees.

" If one wished to understand the meaning that I intended to convey one must understand that when talking of a badly boundaried Prussia I was trying to explain my neutrality. If I did not admit some slight extension of Prussia I should be forced to intervene and to declare war against her. In speaking of the maintenance of your important position in Germany I admitted, on the other hand, those extensions which do not affect my neutrality. When I said that I did not think that I could allow you to undo the work which we had accomplished at the cost of our blood, I did not say that I would not permit you to advance, nor even that I would not consent to the collapse of Italian unity."

The Emperor then spoke of King Victor Emmanuel's inconsiderate action, and he could not help laughing when he told me that the latter never had understood anything of war. He gave me to understand that he was delighted at this check,¹ which would make them think twice about their hankering after independence in relation to himself. He added that he was quite decided not to interfere. Garibaldi's march on Munich also evoked a laugh.

After this conversation the Emperor led me to his large map of Germany, covered with pins of the colours of Austria and Prussia.

He began to discuss Benedek's plan and said that his generals believed that they had fathomed it and found it

¹ Battle of Custoza, 24th June, 1866.

excellent ; personally, he was not sufficiently acquainted with the country to judge. To allow the Prussians to reach Jung-Bunzlau, to advance through the defiles of the mountains by a change of front, that is to say to penetrate behind Josphstadt, to fall on the flank of the Prussians and cut off their retreat ; presumably that was the intention. He considered it excellent if we held sufficient forces. In any case he could not understand why the Prussians, after they had secured the Dresden-Berlin route by the invasion of Saxony, did not push on to Oldenberg and Cracow.

His Majesty then spoke of General Benedek and said that the confidence which our army reposed in him was shared by the French Army. "Consequently," said the Emperor, "in the war with Italy each time that one knows one has to do with Benedek one gets out of the way and takes greater precautions than were taken at Melegnano.

"If he can manœuvre as well with 200,000 men as he can with 30,000 he is the greatest general of the moment."

The Emperor referred to our secret *entente* and spoke hopefully of its results, which might easily assume the proportions of an actual alliance.

Meanwhile the Emperor invited me to visit him whenever I liked, whilst on his side he would write to me or ask me to come whenever he had anything to discuss.

The Empress, whom I saw afterwards, gave me plentiful advice on the appliances needed for operations in the ambulances and hospitals. Above all she urged the necessity of sprinkling hospital beds with carbolic acid, which numerous experiments here have proved to be a preventative against typhus and fevers.

Her Majesty spoke of the ample stocks which the large stores of lint and bandages hold. She gave me their addresses and told me to make any use of her in the matter.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

1st July, 1866.

I saw the Emperor this morning . . . it was clear from His Majesty's tone that the Prussian successes have taken him by surprise, and that he is in some alarm at them. He

still clings to the opinion, or seems to do so, that Austria will retain her prestige, and that even if beaten she will come to the scratch again. He builds this theory on the wonderful vitality shown by her during the wars with the first Napoleon, and he says that the marriage with Marie Louise was made because his uncle was more afraid of Austria than of any other Power. But *quantum mutatus* is the Austria of to-day!

His Majesty knows nothing, or pretends to know nothing, of the future intentions of Italy, but he criticized very freely what had been done up to the present moment, and certainly not in eulogistic terms of Victor Emmanuel. He gave me to understand that Plon Plon¹ wants him to arm, but that he does not mean to do it.

Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon

3rd July.

The consternation here at the successes of Prussia continues to be very great. I speak of high quarters. From accounts received here it would seem that the Austrians have fought well, but that the needle gun is so destructive a weapon that nothing can stand against it.

The Emperor is getting alarmed at his Frankenstein, and is turning his mind a little too late to the problem how Austria is to be saved.

* *Count Goltz to Count Bismarck*

Paris, 8th July, 1866.

By Hand.

Immediately after receiving Your Excellency's esteemed telegram, No. 6, of the 6th inst., which informed me of the Emperor Napoleon's letter and of His Majesty the King's reply in German, I sought an audience which the Emperor granted me that same evening.

He had received His Majesty the King's telegram in the course of the afternoon. I read him the concluding sentence which had been added to it in German, and left a French translation in his hands. I enclose a copy of the latter.

Evidently the Emperor was much pleased with the general tenor of the King's answer. But he asked for an explanation of the conditions for a truce which it mentions, more especially

of the words " Maintenance of the military results achieved up to the present time ". I replied that in case of the co-operation of the King of Italy (in whose concurrence the Emperor never seems to doubt) the King only wishes to secure the maintenance of his army and any military results that have been gained already. Unquestionably the latter inferred the position of the army and its strategical relation to the demarcation line which is being established. The maintenance of the army may oblige him to complete the present partial occupation of Bohemia, more especially the siege of Prague ; so that the cost of the army's upkeep may be defrayed by the enemy. Both points met with the Emperor's approval.

He spoke with intense admiration of the astonishing result of the week's campaign, which constitutes a record in the annals of warfare, and he acknowledged that this is not attributable to the use of needle-guns only. Further he considered it necessary to explain his recent actions, and to apologize for my not having been informed of them sooner. In the latter connection he stated that Prince Metternich did not bring him the Austrian proposals until late in the evening.

As regards the first, he said that Russia and England have demanded a joint assurance of the continuance of the German Confederation. When I replied that I was unaware of the English action, but that the Russian was based apparently on the statement made by Prince Gortschakoff to Baron Talleyrand, which Baron Budberg, in the face of recent events, had pronounced unworkable, the Emperor answered that it was concerned quite seriously with a renunciatory note in Berlin of the three neutral Powers. I ventured to reply that it would scarcely have served the interests of France to save a Confederation whose constitution, so early as 1859, all but forced Prussia into a coalition against that country. I then referred to the Emperor's letter of 11th June, and reminded His Majesty, without contradiction, that he himself had guaranteed the entirely retrospective character of the Austrian position in Germany and the strengthening of the Middle States, to which it referred. Further, I reminded him

of the Austrian reform project of 1863, from which the re-establishment of our temporarily disturbed relations with France dates. It was on the same grounds, that is to say with the object of an empire of 70 million souls, that Austria allied itself with the Bamberg States before the outbreak of war. Under these circumstances the Emperor's mediation caused me no anxiety. It secured us against concessions which the King's generosity *might have granted* if the Emperor Franz Josef had asked for them. At the same time I drew His Majesty's attention to the point in the King's telegram according to which General Gablenz had requested a truce "pending direct negotiations". This suggests that the Emperor Franz Josef is exploring two roads at one and the same time in order to discover which offers the most favourable terms. The Emperor admitted that this aspect of the case had not escaped him.

In the course of our very protracted conversation I constantly reminded the Emperor of his pre-war promises and of his assent to our programme; insisting that further considerations applied only to the extras that we should have to claim in compensation for the sacrifices of war. The Emperor never contradicted me, though, on the other hand, he rarely expressed agreement.

Yesterday I visited M. Drouyn de Lhuys, who assured me that His Majesty the King's letter has produced a most friendly impression. It is open, sympathetic, and unreserved; altogether different from those the King of Italy writes. I observed that the Emperor acknowledges the mutual obligations between ourselves and Italy, and consequently must have foreseen the difficulty of the task he had assumed without consulting the two belligerent parties. The Minister replied that the worst of it is that each party lays the blame on the other. I answered that this was unavoidable, and that I expected nothing from the truce negotiations. Such negotiations would presuppose that a common point of agreement had been reached between Prussia, Italy, and Austria. If France wishes to intervene in these, as later in the terms of peace, she must first guarantee that the Austrian army in the south shall remain stationary.

After our experiences during the discussion of armaments we can no longer rely on Austria's bare word. French guarantees are essential. Otherwise the only result of any transaction Prussia might arrange with Austria would be that we should be confronted with 150,000 fresh Austrian troops—and this would scarcely harmonize with the promise of benevolent neutrality. By this agreement France would be depriving our ally of his chosen battle-field and it is doubtful whether he could find another which would conform with the obligations imposed upon him by the treaty.

To this I added the question whether it is true that France has sent ships and troops to Venice. The Minister answered that these are only in preparation ; it is hoped that the waving of a few flags will prove sufficient to protect the present French occupation of Venice. If, on the contrary, Italy attempts to seize the town, France will have no scruples in responding vigorously.

With regard to General Gablenz's negotiations, concerning which I held contrary information, M. Drouyn de Lhuys observed that according to Austria they concerned the truce only, and that the General holds no political authority.

The Minister attempted to deduce from our military successes that Austria is innocent of our continual reproach that she had been the first to arm, whereas we ourselves have been preparing for a long time. I replied that his first conclusion was certainly wrong : Austria did arm. She was not ready only because she never would be ready, even if she had three years' notice. I admitted that we were prepared ; we had been prepared for years, thanks to our excellent military organization which, in anticipation of the war which was bound to occur sooner or later, enabled us to place 300,000 men in the field within eleven days.

M. Drouyn de Lhuys himself took the initiative to inform me concerning the professed Anglo-Russian action. He had not yet heard of the Russian move when he told me that no proposals had been made on his side. He had told Baron Budberg that France, to whom the German Confederation was neither useful nor harmful, was bound by its present friendly relations with Prussia to resist a joint

declaration which is hostile to Prussian policy. I allowed myself to remark that such a statement had about as much significance as if a European Power of the present day were to declare Francis II King of Naples.

On the whole the interview was of a very friendly nature, and I was concerned to insist repeatedly and without contradiction on our minimum claims ; especially on the reorganization of Germany with Austria excluded. I remarked that Austria could no longer reproach us with our treaty with Italy, since it considered its Italian possessions so utterly worthless that, although victorious in the south, it handed them over to the Emperor of the French.

Since M. Drouyn de Lhuys was impatient for news about the truce and our terms of peace, I told him the contents of the telegram, No. 59, of last evening ; referring to the possibility of an interruption in telegraphic intercourse by means of a private note.

Yesterday afternoon I had a talk with General Fleury, who expressed his satisfaction at our success in the most unmistakable terms. He told me he is completely isolated, though he believes he is in agreement with the Emperor. He seemed anxious to be sent as mediator to royal headquarters. If Your Excellency thinks this suitable, please telegraph me instructions ; I could then give the Emperor a hint.

The French generals are consumed with envy at the Prussian victories, and sooner or later will urge war against us. However, the Emperor will not willingly consent, since he knows that we should have the whole of Germany, probably Russia, and possibly England, on our side ; and in the present plight of the Austrian army Russia alone could easily hold it in check. . . .

* *Prince Reuss to King William I*

Paris, 10th July, 1866.

I reached Paris this morning at about 11 a.m., and have had the honour, during the course of the afternoon, of delivering Your Majesty's letter to the Emperor Napoleon. The audience, which lasted a considerable time,

impressed me unfavourably. I missed the calm and clarity which I associate with him. To-day he was a man whose conscience seems uneasy, and who is at a loss how to extricate himself from the situation which he himself has created in Italy.

After the Emperor had read Your Majesty's letter he inquired the terms on which Prussia was prepared to grant a truce. I replied that since the Emperor had offered to act as intermediary it was for him to step between the belligerents and suggest terms. I added that I was not commissioned to discuss the truce with him, but that Your Majesty had commanded me to assure the Emperor that Prussia would act with great moderation when the time came. I drew attention to the fact that this toleration would be easier to estimate if we knew the exact strength of feeling amongst the Prussian people, who were beginning to demand categorically that Prussia should not relinquish her conquests. But in spite of this feeling Your Majesty would be content to recognize as a basis of peace a confederation reform scheme, such as was proposed in the former Assembly, subject to a few minor modifications. The Emperor would find these demands all the easier to accept since he has himself declared that the proposals do not prejudice French interests.

To my intense surprise I learnt that the Emperor knew nothing but the general outlines of this Confederation Reform Scheme. It was true that Count Goltz had mentioned it once ; it was possible that he had declared himself not unfavourable to it ; but he really could not remember that he had ever consented definitely to the plan and was not at all sure what it included.

I did not attempt to conceal my amazement from the Emperor. Your Majesty had been confident that the Emperor approved of the scheme, and had believed that he could rely on the fact. The Emperor's conversations with Count Bismarck, both at Biarritz and in Paris, long before Prussia had expressed its views on the proposed reform, had long since convinced the King, my master, that the Emperor sympathized wholeheartedly with the Prussian plan.

His Majesty seemed considerably perplexed how to

disentangle himself from these conflicting arguments. After I had refreshed his memory by recapitulating the main points of the Reform Scheme he declared that both England and Russia would oppose the exclusion of Austria. From what the Emperor told me later, in connection with Confederation reform, I gathered that, although he was willing to allow Prussia an increase of territory, indeed he was definitely in favour of it, he foresaw, in a Prussia which should rule Germany alone and without the counterbalance of Austria, an all too powerful neighbour. A parliament in which Prussia will preponderate fills him with anxiety and he anticipates that even if Prussia does not annex the middle and small States at the present moment, this act will be only a question of time : "*une annexion en deux temps*," as the Empress told me.

Against this I urged that, in the present state of German politics, one point which especially concerned the Emperor would prove decisive ; which hand wielded the sword. Since Prussia claimed the military leadership only in North Germany, whilst the South German States were to be left to their own devices, it stood to reason that the concentration of power in Prussia's hand would not materialize. Prussia never will assimilate with the South Germans. Consequently she will not extend her dominion in their direction, but will content herself with discussing with them in parliament certain internal affairs of mutual interest.

Later the Emperor reverted to the question of the truce, but when I urged him to send someone to headquarters ^a Your Majesty asks he decided that this would only waste time and that the telegraph was to be preferred.

I pointed out that the wires were often damaged by the inhabitants, so that an uninterrupted correspondence by that means would be impossible ; and that it was for this reason that Your Majesty wished the Emperor to send a confidential messenger, armed with his proposals, to headquarters, who could at once organize the truce. At the same time I stated most emphatically that Your Majesty will never consent to a truce which does not contain the "terms of peace." I appealed to the Emperor's sense of justice, etc.

must convince him that victorious Prussia could not possibly accept a truce which would only give the defeated enemy time to recover. Also the King, my most gracious master, could come to no agreement with the enemy without the assent of the King of Italy.

The Emperor confessed to me fairly openly that it was Italy that caused him most anxiety ; lest it should refuse to obey his orders and continue fighting. Then he dismissed me with the promise : " He would think it over and that he hoped to see me again."

The other part of our conversation, in which I gave the Emperor a detailed account of the battle of Königgrätz and of the movements of Your Majesty's troops on that glorious day, seemed to please him better. He inquired especially as to the personal share Your Majesty took in the supreme command of the battle, and after the effect of the needle-gun and the artillery.

A longer conversation which I had after this audience with the Empress only supplied a commentary on the Emperor's statements. It would suit His Majesty far better if we annexed Hanover or Hesse-Cassel only ; this hegemony in Germany made him very uneasy. " You have displayed such energy and promptitude in your movements that with such a nation for our neighbour we should run the risk of finding you one day in front of Paris before we had ever suspected it. I shall go to bed French and wake up Prussian," said the Empress. She maintains that public opinion in France will soon realize these dangers, that a movement will be started which the Government will not be in a position to repress, and that we shall need caution. She claims that France has done us an immense service by her neutrality ; Austria complains bitterly of the fact. We should not forget this service, but should make it possible for the Emperor to arrange terms of peace which will not humiliate Austria too severely.

I asked the noble lady several times what she suggested ; I begged her to arrange for someone to be sent to headquarters with these proposals, because this was the only means of ending the war quickly. Finally she promised me

to do her best ; insisting time after time that for herself France desired nothing but peace. The Empress then fetched an atlas, and sketched all sorts of plans upon the map for Germany. From this whole conversation, part in jest and part in earnest, I gathered that the crux lies in dread of a too strong and powerful neighbour, and that the wedge of a neutral dummy would be welcomed joyfully.

In conclusion the Empress remarked that after all the views of Prussia and France do not differ very widely, and that there is still room for an agreement between them.

I have thought it my duty in this letter to give Your Majesty a simple *résumé* of my conversation with the Emperor and the Empress, without drawing any political conclusions. Count Goltz's detailed report, which accompanies it, will throw a clearer light on the existing situation in Paris than I am in a position to supply.

Lord Cawley to Lord Stanley

10th July, 1866.

Prince Metternich on hearing of the passage of the Po by the troops under General Cialdini had inquired of the Emperor what was to be done and whether the Austrians were to defend themselves or not. The Prince received no answer until yesterday afternoon, when he was desired to wait upon His Imperial Majesty. The following is the account given me of the conversations which ensued.

His Majesty adverted first to the state of despondency which, according to the accounts which he had received, prevailed at Vienna. The Prince replied that the accounts were quite correct and that he himself had contributed as much as any to that depression, for that he had not been able to conceal from his Government that the hopes which had been entertained of France for the restoration of peace could, notwithstanding the sacrifices made by Austria, no longer be counted upon in the presence of facts. The Emperor answered that he had wished to proceed with caution but that his resolution was now taken, that he was about to send Prince Napoleon to his father-in-law, King Victor Emmanuel, and an A.D.C. to each of the headquarters of the Italian and

Prussian armies, that they would be instructed to insist on an immediate armistice. General Le Boeuf would be employed on one service, General Frossard on the other. The French Ambassador at Berlin would likewise be instructed to proceed to the headquarters of the King of Prussia with orders to support General Fossard's remonstrances. The French fleet in the Mediterranean would at the same time be directed to proceed without loss of time to Venice, and the soldiers of the active army on furlough would at once be called in.

Prince Metternich, who had gone to the Emperor in great emotion, said that the decision of His Majesty had prevented this being the last interview which he should have asked of him for, having led His Government after the declaration of the *Moniteur* to believe in the sincerity of His Majesty's support, had this been now denied nothing would have remained for him but to take his leave and to have joined the army now fighting for the defence of his country.

The Emperor embraced Prince Metternich, and bid him take heart ; he said that there was no longer any cause for the shadow of a difference between the French and Austrian Governments, that the cession of Venetia had removed any difficulty to a good understanding, and that he would not permit the loss of another inch of ground to the Austrian Empire ; nay, more, in any negotiation for peace he would do all in his power to procure the cession to Austria of the County of Glatz.

Speaking of the fresh pretensions of Italy, His Majesty declared that, should the Italians attempt to take possession of any territory beyond the Venetia handed over to them by himself, they would find a French army on the frontier to oppose them.

The Emperor added that he would himself take measures for restoring confidence at Vienna. His Majesty telegraphed to the Emperor of Austria assuring him of his sympathy and support, and exhorting him to allow neither his subjects nor his enemies to suppose that the cause of Austria was lost.

I now revert to events antecedent to this interview. That the Emperor, as soon as the first flush of excitement had

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

11th July, 1866.

The Emperor sent for me. He said that he found himself in a most cruel position and that it had become absolutely necessary to take a resolution and get out of it. That resolution was to restore peace if possible, but to effect this Austria must be prepared to accept the preliminaries of peace insisted upon by Prussia. He had seen Goltz, Reuss, and Metternich, and the matter stood thus at the present moment. He had desired Goltz to telegraph to Berlin to ask whether, if these preliminaries were accepted by Austria, an armistice would be immediately granted. If the answer was favourable he should recommend the Austrian Government to close with it. Prince Metternich wanted him to place an army of observation on the frontier, which he said would bring Prussia to reason at once. He, the Emperor, on the contrary, was convinced that in the present excited state of Germany such a measure would have no effect. On the contrary, insolent questions as to his intentions would be put to him, and war would be the consequence.

But he was not prepared for war, nor could he be under two months. The object, then, of all parties should be to restore peace, and he hoped that Her Majesty's Government would aid him both at Berlin and Vienna by recommending the one to consent to an armistice if the preliminaries of peace were agreed to, and the other to agree to those preliminaries.

The Emperor gave many reasons why in his opinion it would be madness to continue the war on the part of Austria. She would infallibly be beaten, and the exigencies of Prussia would increase. At present she might retain all her dominions with the exception of Venetia, on the condition of exclusion from Germany. This would not be a great hardship and she had better accept the position.

I observed that Italy was already increasing her demands. Did the Emperor mean to support those demands? I did not obtain any positive answer.

I have not time to write to you at the length I would wish, for I only saw the Emperor very late. What I am anxious for

do the same—and, further, if necessary, press the Prussian Government to consent to an armistice. Prince Metternich, His Majesty continued, wanted him to place an army of observation on the Prussian frontier with a view to controlling the pretensions of Prussia, but His Majesty felt that such a step might produce very different consequences—that flushed with their successes, proud of their army, and driven on by popular excitement, the Prussian Government might demand explanations, which might lead to irritating discussions and eventually to war. That His Majesty was most anxious to avoid war, and, indeed, could not prepare for it under two months—that, therefore, he could not comply with Prince Metternich's wishes. . . .

The Emperor continued that if Austria persisted in carrying on the war he feared that she would not obtain the terms which were possible at present. His Majesty had no confidence in her unaided powers of resistance. She would incur fresh disasters and all her neighbours would want to participate in the spoils resulting from her ruin. Besides which emissaries would undermine the spirit of the population.

Speaking of the efforts which he had made, and was making, to terminate the war His Majesty said that he had accepted the cession of Venetia in the belief that he was rendering a service to the Italian Government. He did not think that an Italian army could become masters of the Quadrilateral ; a war there might be prolonged indefinitely to the ruin of Italy. However, he had no pretensions to impose his opinion, still less could he think of making war upon a country which his arms had helped to constitute. If Italy would not receive Venetia from him she must take it for herself.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

13th July.

Prince Reuss saw the Emperor immediately after his arrival in Paris. It may be well to state that he was very intimate at the Tuilleries during several years when he filled the post of Secretary to the Prussian Embassy here, and was probably chosen on that account for the delicate mission with which he had been entrusted.

this dangerous auxiliary which in 1859 contributed to the cessation of hostilities in Italy. I am so convinced that the interests of both our countries and of Europe itself demand a prompt solution of the impending difficulties that I do not hesitate to accept the principles proposed by Your Government at Frankfort. Prince Reuss will explain to Your Majesty the difficulties of my situation and how greatly my efforts tend to strengthen confidence in Your Majesty's lofty and benevolent views for France.

As for Italy, I have no doubt that she will accept the armistice on the day that you accept it.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

16th July, 1866.

It appears to me that the altered position of the Continent which must come upon the signature of peace may become one of greater peril to England than is at present anticipated. Two new large military powers will have been created which may certainly prove a check to each other and to France, but which may as certainly combine if they have any object to attain in common. But these powers also vie at becoming great maritime powers, and however little we may dread a combination of their military forces, we ought hardly to look with indifference upon a possible combination of their naval resources.

Now since I have known the Emperor the coalition of two or three powers to keep the others in order has always been a favourite theory of his. Before the Crimean War it was England and France which were to exercise this rule ; during the war, and particularly during the negotiations for peace, England, France, and Austria were to form the favoured Triumvirate. Afterwards, and until the end of the Italian war, England, France, and Russia was the order of the day.

Since then many little events have occurred to weaken the Emperor's confidence in England, not, indeed, that he does not desire to keep well with us, but that he cannot always feel sure of our sympathy and support. I should not now, therefore, be surprised to see him lean towards Prussia,

* Prince Metternich to Count Mensdorff

Paris, 26th July, 1866.

Very confidential.

After my audience with the Emperor, which left a most painful impression, I visited the Empress. Her Majesty received me with tears in her eyes. She is very uneasy about the Emperor's health and about his *physical and moral decline*, of which she gave me the most convincing proofs.

"During the five days of my absence," she said, "everything has changed. On my return I found the Emperor weaker than ever, and completely at the mercy of the man whom he has made Prime Minister, who is the cause of our moral decadence and who, if left to himself, will dethrone us. I had returned indignant at what I had heard *en route*, all the more indignant because I had witnessed the detestable effects produced upon the public and upon the army by the unheard of attitude of the Government. I find a man sick, irresolute, exhausted."

The Empress told me afterwards that for the last two years (the time of the scandal which I have had occasion to mention already) the Emperor has fallen into a state of complete prostration; no longer busying himself about the Government, but writing *Julius Cæsar* and devoting to it the little strength that remains to him. She told me that the ministerial councils which he had attended during that time furnished ample proofs of this exhaustion, which no longer permitted him to direct the Council.

"He can no longer walk, no longer sleep, and scarcely eat," said the Empress.

She told me that at the *soirée* of 4th July, at which I was present, the last gleam sparkled in the Emperor's eyes. The instinct of the magnificent role which we were giving him, the thought of the vast effect which would be produced upon the world by the note which he had just been writing for the *Moniteur*, all this had acted upon him like alcohol—and had intoxicated him to such a degree that she herself was alarmed at the responsibility he was assuming. Two days later, when the difficulties became apparent, and above all when the news from Vienna gave him the measure of our

disasters, he relapsed into a decline which had only grown worse.

It is to the point that the day before yesterday, Monday (23rd July), the Empress proposed to the Emperor that he should abdicate and entrust the regency to her.

"I assure you," continued Her Majesty, "that we are marching to our downfall, and the best thing would be if the Emperor could *disappear suddenly*, for a time at least."

Her Majesty discussed at length what we could do to arrive, without grave disaster, at the moment when the Emperor is compelled to change sides. According to the Empress this cannot fail to happen on the day when he revisits the army. She tried to induce the Emperor to visit the camp at Chalons before going to Vichy, but she failed. At Vichy the Emperor will see no one except Drouyn de Lhuys, whom she has succeeded in sending there. During this time she will do what she can to influence the other Ministers. She begged me to my best with Rouher and General Fleury, who she believes has still some influence on this dull and worn-out mind.

She believes that our threats to come to an immediate agreement with Prussia and Italy would galvanize the Emperor a little.

Never, since I have known the Imperial couple, have I seen the Emperor such a complete cipher or the Empress taking our interests to heart with such intense ardour and zeal.

Unfortunately the result of it all is that we cannot yet count on any energetic move on the part of France. What *seems* to me inconceivable is that the present state of things cannot last long. The French public and the army will effect a drastic change which the Emperor will not be able to avoid.

I do not think the future is a pleasant look-out for England. I have no faith in the friendship of Prussia, and if ever she becomes a naval power she will give us trouble. The Emperor, who sees of what little assistance England with her present policy can be to him, thinks it probably safer to trust to Bismarck, who happens to be as great an enemy to revolution as himself. We shall see, however, what the latter will do with the democratic elements which abound in Germany.

Lord Cowley to Lord Bloomfield

31st July, 1866.

I forgot in my letter of yesterday to answer your question about the Emperor's health. I do not conceive that there is anything seriously wrong with him. He suffers from rheumatism and neuralgic pains, and like all of us he is growing older. It is the fashion to say that his intellect is not what it was. I should rather say that it is in energy, not in intellect, that he is the worse for wear. His conduct to Austria has been abominable, but I do not think intentionally so. . . . What Prussia may have promised remains to be seen.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

10th August, 1866.

I have seen my Prussian colleague this afternoon who, on condition of absolute secrecy, and on an assurance from me that his revelation shall never appear in a blue book (the terror of all foreign diplomats), has communicated to me all that passed between himself and the French Government with reference to the demand made at Berlin for an extension of the French frontier towards the Rhine. I have made a hasty memorandum of his statement, which I enclose, and which you must receive with indulgence as time fails me to write otherwise than rapidly.

Goltz holds the same opinion that I do—that this demand is an afterthought, brought about by the state of public opinion in France. There is no doubt that the Emperor is seriously alarmed at the information which he has received from the country. The Empress told Goltz that she looked upon the present state of things as *le commencement de la*

fin de la dynastie. This is exaggeration. What with Mexico, what with Italy, what with his late mediation, the Emperor has no doubt fallen in prestige, but as yet there are no signs of public discontent. What is more unsatisfactory is the state of his health. He has come back from Vichy very unwell, and there is no doubt that his bodily indisposition is the effect of the over-excitement of the last three months. He is better to-day, but perfect quiet is ordered and he has not seen his Ministers since his return. There is something wrong with the bladder, for which leeches were applied yesterday.

Among other things which Goltz remarked to me was His Majesty's nervousness, and want of calm (so extraordinary in him) during the late negotiations, and his almost abject fear lest Prussia should continue hostilities. He said that he put his existence into Goltz's hands.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

10th August, 1866.

The Emperor, said Drouyn de Lhuys, had been unwilling to complicate matters at Nikolsburg by the introduction of French expectations, but now that peace was as good as made the moment had arrived when the interests of France could no longer be neglected. The subject then had been brought before the Prussian Government by M. Benedetti in the most amicable form. No official demand had been made, but it had been intimated to the Prussian Government that France would require a better strategical frontier for her defence than she now possessed. There was no wish for aggrandizement in the Emperor's mind, but a great solicitude for the safety of France.

Colonel Claremont¹ to Lord Cowley

14th August, 1866.

That war against Prussia is certain at some future date does not seem to be doubted for a moment by any officer in the army. Time may modify their views, but I never saw them so excited upon any subject; the most sensible, the quietest, and most reasonable amongst them say openly that

¹ Military Attaché at the British Embassy in Paris.

it is a question of existence for the Emperor, and that the aggrandizement of Prussia renders it imperative that they should again have the Rhine as their frontier line.

Lord Cowley to Lord Bloomfield

15th August, 1866.

There cannot be two opinions as to the state of the public mind as well as of the sentiments of the Army. If Prussia does not make some sort of concession the Emperor will find it difficult to keep the one and the other in order.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

16th August, 1866.

The events of the last month have been so extraordinary that I can only account for them by supposing that the Emperor's mind and heart are failing him. It is impossible that the demands made at Berlin should have been put forward without his full concurrence—yet on Saturday he told Goltz that Benedetti had acted without instructions, that he had been misunderstood by Bismarck, and that he (the Emperor) requested that the whole affair of the demand should be considered "*comme nulle et non avenue*".

This happened after reading Bismarck's despatch declining to comply with the French demands, which appears to have been couched in language that Goltz thought necessary to modify. Goltz describes the Emperor as positively an object of pity, looking wretchedly ill and hardly seeming to know what he was aiming at. His Majesty admitted that he had always declared in his conversations with Goltz that he wanted nothing for France, and that Prussia was perfectly justified in resisting his present pretensions, and he excused what he had done as the result of the pressure of popular opinion, ending by expressing the hope that it might still be possible for Prussia to do something to alleviate his position towards the French nation. Goltz seems desirous of obtaining some concession in the Emperor's favour, and I presume that Benedetti's instructions are to work in the same sense. Drouyn, who does not agree with the Emperor, told Goltz so very fairly and said, moreover, that the Emperor in desisting from his intentions was preparing for his own downfall.

Such inconsistencies as I have described on the Emperor's part can only be accounted for by great weakness somewhere, and I begin to think that the illness under which he is suffering, which has something to do with the bladder, affects his head, which I am told is sometimes the case, although it is not dangerous.

I hear on all sides that there is great dissatisfaction in the country, and particularly in the Army, not that people care one sixpence about an extension of frontier, but that they cannot stomach the favour displayed by the Emperor towards Prussia. War is in general looked upon as inevitable.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

17th August, 1866.

I saw the Emperor for a short time this afternoon. I thought him looking very ill, and he complained of weakness and fatigue. It seems that he had another attack of fever yesterday.

My conversation with His Majesty was not of any great importance. He alluded to Belgium, and I said that his assurances had been what I expected and were quite satisfactory. He complained that there was no longer any secrecy in diplomacy, and said that his intentions had been misrepresented and that an inquiry had been magnified into a demand.

He seemed so much out of spirits that I endeavoured to give him what comfort I could by observing that when time was given to France for reflection it would be seen that His Majesty had rendered great service to humanity by his mediation. . . .

The rest of the conversation turned on what Prussia might or might not do. The Emperor professed utter ignorance of her intentions, but thought her difficulties would be great.

I certainly never saw His Majesty so much out of sorts.

* *Count Goltz to Count Bismarck*

Paris, 20th August, 1866.

The fresh proposals which, at the Emperor's express command, M. Benedetti has made to Your Excellency, are so entirely contradictory to those which M. Drouyn de Lhuys

presented similarly at the Imperial command (as contained in the second postscript to my communication, No. 435), that, on receipt of your telegram of the 18th inst., I felt obliged to obtain immediately an authentic explanation of the discrepancies.

The Emperor received me yesterday afternoon. The essential points of his explanation I hastened to telegraph to Your Excellency, under No. 109. But since it is important to throw every possible light on this particular matter, I have the honour to supply in what follows a detailed account of my conversation with the Emperor.

I told His Majesty that the evening before I had received a telegram from Your Excellency which informed me confidentially of certain proposals which M. Benedetti had made on Friday evening in respect to Luxemburg and Belgium. The said Ambassador claimed to be directly commissioned by the Emperor, and it seemed that even M. Drouyn de Lhuys was to know nothing about it. Possibly, therefore, Your Excellency would never have mentioned it to me if, on the following day, you had not received a communication from me the contents of which glaringly contradicted M. Benedetti's disclosures. I now told the Emperor that on Monday I discussed with M. Drouyn de Lhuys the conversation which I had with His Majesty on the 11th; and that the Minister, while not concealing that he himself held a different opinion, added the assurance that he would carry out conscientiously whatever policy the Emperor commanded. When the conversation passed to Belgium the Minister said that unfortunately the Emperor had barred every possibility of French aggrandizement in this direction also. At the moment he was doubtful whether the declaration of His Majesty referred to any agreement in regard to future eventualities or only to the present scheme for rectifying the boundary, and he was intending to give me fuller information later. Accordingly when I questioned him on Thursday he told me His Majesty did not consider this an opportune moment to discuss Belgium. This I said I had reported to Your Excellency and that the discrepancy between the declaration of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the confidential

disclosures of the Ambassador must have caused Your Excellency to make me acquainted with the latter.

The Emperor, who had, in the course of my explanations, given many signs of impatience and in particular had interrupted me in my report of the statements made by Drouyn de Lhuys, although I had done this in a most forbearing manner, with the exclamation : "I see that this cannot go on ! He must go !" Now he answered :—

He had tried to avoid the unfortunate results which had arisen out of the first French proposals. He could not deny that he was dissatisfied with the way in which M. Drouyn de Lhuys had handled the matter. It was true that he had himself approved of the proposals. But he had intended to enter upon a friendly and strictly confidential exchange of views with the Prussian Government, and to avoid anything which could disturb the good relations between the two Powers. Instead of this a peremptory and threatening character had been given to proposals which should have formed the basis of friendly discussion. Also the matter had become public knowledge, the newspapers had taken it up, and consequently the refusal had made a disagreeable impression throughout France. After this experience he had considered it advisable to adopt a different course. He had therefore instructed M. Benedetti verbally to continue to exchange ideas confidentially and amicably with Your Excellency and to ascertain what was practicable in the direction towards which public opinion in France had taken up such a decided attitude. By this means it might be possible to avoid official despatches and the indiscretions which seemed inseparable from them. Concerning the correspondence with Lord Cowley, the Emperor told me nothing that I did not know already ; and did not appear to consider that the communication made to Lord Cowley by Drouyn de Lhuys at His Majesty's command afforded any obstacle in the way of the execution of the instructions given to M. Benedetti.

I expressed to the Emperor my thanks and satisfaction in regard to the course His Majesty had taken as well as in regard to the sentiments to which he had thereby given expression, adding that in these circumstances I also would not mention

the matter to M. Drouyn de Lhuys. At the same time I drew attention to the fact that at our last meeting (before receiving the Emperor's last instructions) M. Benedetti had discussed the compensation question with what I considered excessive warmth, and that if, as it seemed, he had maintained the same attitude in his interviews with Your Excellency he was gravely imperilling the success of his mission. According to the confidential information which I had received from Your Excellency, the Imperial Ambassador declared that under no circumstances does the Emperor desire a breach in our friendly relations ; but he is displaying a greater zeal than the case justifies when he presses for an answer from His Majesty the King within three or four days—and more of the same sort. Naturally this must annoy Your Excellency, and cannot help embittering the calm and passionless spirit on which such negotiations depend for their success. On the other hand, it cannot be forgotten that the matter concerns a decision which the King holds very strongly. He regards any extension of French territory as unthinkable. After mature deliberation he is reluctant to bind himself, in view of remote eventualities, concerning the recognition of a neutral country, and thereby to oppose England, which at present is especially well disposed towards us. The decision is not made easier by the unrest which the recent French proposals have produced. Consequently any pressure is likely to evoke a refusal. Only if His Majesty the King is allowed ample leisure to weigh this difficult matter carefully is an agreement possible.

The Emperor coincided fully with this opinion, and said that if M. Benedetti displayed excessive zeal he must restrain him. There was no need for desperate haste. The matter should be discussed in a calm and friendly spirit, and all pressure should be avoided. In no case did the Emperor wish to endanger our friendly relations.

I carefully avoided any explicit discussion of the proposals, because I was insufficiently acquainted with their details ; and I had no cause to suggest any alternative to the method of communication between Your Excellency and M. Benedetti which the Emperor has planned, or to set it aside. Similarly

the Emperor, who was ignorant as to how much I knew about the proposals, avoided the initiative and merely asked if I thought that he would obtain Luxemburg immediately. I replied that really I was not in a position to offer any opinion, but I scarcely saw how we should be able to do more than renounce our garrison rights ; and that consequently the question was whether the King of Holland would be satisfied with a hint of future developments. The Emperor objected vehemently that it was quite impossible that this Sovereign should be allowed any hand in future settlements, and seemed to presuppose that he was likely to suffer, and to suffer at our hands.

With regard to the indiscretions which the Emperor deplored, I reminded him that sometimes *we* had been accused of them. Meanwhile I was able to produce fresh proof that information concerning the French proposals had issued from Paris itself. I then informed the Emperor of the actual contents of the written report sent me by the King's Ambassador in Brussels, dated on the 10th inst., No. 391.

I am sorry that I was not in possession of a communication which reached me only this morning. The same speculator on the Bourse, who knew of the plan for a Convention before I did, announced yesterday that France had made fresh proposals to Berlin, and that their acceptance is confidently expected. This suggests that the leakage is to seek amongst the Emperor's immediate surroundings.

Your Excellency will find in the above a confirmation of the suspicions which I mentioned in my telegram No. 110, in reply to the esteemed telegram No. 126. There is not the least doubt that the Emperor will avoid the slightest estrangement from us. The involuntary signs of displeasure which he displayed over the clumsy conduct of his servants—and, indeed, equally of his Minister of Foreign Affairs and of his Ambassador to Berlin—confirmed his positive assurances. That M. Benedetti should have been taken into his chief's confidence and that the latter incited him to speak rashly is most unlikely, owing to the personal enmity that exists between them. Whether the Ambassador is so lacking in judgment as to believe that by means of pressure and

peremptory demands he is more likely to succeed in his aim, rather than by a continuance of conciliatory representations, Your Excellency is in a better position to judge. The Emperor is in fact, very impatient for the attainment of such a result as will give him that very desirable firmness of purpose to resist the importunities of nearly all his counsellors, M. Benedetti may have interpreted this impatience wrongly. Meanwhile it seems to me more probable, that he is being driven by vanity, to bring about a rapid decision in regard to his own personal position. He wishes either to achieve a brilliant success in France or to resign a post in which he has been uncomfortable for a very long time. These conspiracies of many highly placed servants of the Emperor against the better thought out policy of their master, appears to me a matter which is in the highest degree noteworthy from our point of view. What we must bear in mind is that the Emperor will in the end either go with the stream or finally sink beneath it ! In this, I think, we find a pressing interest to vindicate the Emperor's policy. An honourable alliance with France will be no less useful to us. The latter has, through his mediation, obtained such a hold on German affairs as may very seriously hamper us sooner or later, when the inevitable moment comes when we shall have to draw South Germany into our political orbit, an eventuality to which every one here, even the Emperor, is already fully alive. Therefore I think it would be expedient for us even now to maintain a free hand *vis-à-vis* an agreement on the Belgian question, besides which I am convinced that before long we shall be confronted by the "Austrian Question", with which inevitably the Eastern will be linked. The Emperor invariably recoils from this thought which, whether he likes it or not, will yet confront him. Then the alliance with France may be more useful to us than that with England, and all the more so since a state of tension between Prussia and Russia would then be unavoidable. In any case, I consider it is easier for us to adopt a right and practicable attitude towards the eventualities of the Belgian problem to-day than to wait until these eventualities actually occur.

The despatches which Your Excellency is sending me this evening will contain the instructions I need on the above points. Similarly I have endeavoured to place clearly before Your Excellency those views on the matter which I consider most urgent.

After the Emperor had dismissed me, I paid my respects to the Empress, whom I had not seen for three weeks. Her Majesty's expressions confirmed my impression of the Emperor's friendliness, and of his decided disinclination to break with us. The Empress charged me with having announced the purchase of French horses. She maintained that our army was twice as strong as the French and asserted, in jest, that France had to guard against a Prussian invasion for the conquest of Alsace and Lorraine. She regarded our supremacy in Germany as a mere matter of time. Afterwards she confirmed the declaration which she had made at our last conversation concerning French mediation. She was definitely opposed in principle to the cession of Venice, but for the sake of France's honour *vis-à-vis*, Italy, she was equally strongly in favour of the project being carried out.

She confessed, however, openly, that she has greater sympathy with a Power which has carried out its policy brilliantly, than with one which everywhere gives evidence of the most pitiable incapacity. She repeated her anxiety concerning the internal feeling in France. Finally, she expressed the earnest wish for lasting peace, and spoke of the approach of next year's great Industrial Exhibition.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

28th August, 1866.

I had some conversation with the Emperor on Saturday evening, after a dinner which he gave to Princess Christian. He was better than when I had seen him some days before, but still complained of attacks of fever and weakness, and was evidently low and out of spirits.

He said nothing very new but seemed anxious to justify himself against public opinion. He observed that no doubt he had not been able to affect all he wished, but that he considered the present state of Europe, although giving

influence and importance to Prussia, as preferable to the existence of the old Confederation as far as France is concerned. Before no European question could be raised without having the German Confederation on your back—from the Rhine to Trieste every question became German. Now at least every country must answer for itself, and could make alliances where it pleased without having to examine whether these alliances came within the precincts of federal obligations or not. I asked His Majesty why, such being his opinion, he did not take measures for explaining them to France. At present nobody understood the principles which had guided his conduct lately. It would be worth his while to enlighten the public mind. He replied that he intended to do so.

It is easy to see that he is waxing more and more angry with Prussia. He suspects further that some understanding is forming between Russia and Prussia, based on Russia being allowed to have her way in the East. Neither are his feelings towards Italy at the moment of the most amiable.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

14th September, 1866.

The young Duc de Leuchtenberg has been here, and the Emperor told him with the utmost naïveté, “*qu'il avait fait une bien mauvaise campagne*,” that he had been convinced that Austria and Prussia would have fought long enough to give him time to make his decision, and to have enabled him to enforce it—that things had turned out quite differently—that he could not disguise from himself that public opinion in France was very much excited, that his position, therefore, had become very difficult.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

18th September, 1866.

The Imperial manifesto or explanation has appeared at last. It is the joint concoction of His Majesty and La Valette. I think that it will do good, more perhaps abroad than at home. For France will not so easily forget the change effected in the Emperor's policy between the 11th June and 4th July, nor the unsatisfied demand made for a rectification of the

frontiers. Not, I sincerely believe, that the nation really cares for an extension of territory, but their pride is wounded that a claim should have been made and disregarded. . . .

His Majesty, I am told, improves in health and will probably go to Biarritz on Thursday.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

Compiègne, 11th December, 1866.

I had a very long conversation yesterday with the Emperor *de omnibus rebus* of which I will endeavour to give you a summary. I am sorry to say that I think him neither well nor in spirits. He says that he is all right again, but he looks shockingly ill.

I will begin with home matters. They evidently weigh on the Emperor's mind. He says, *perhaps* truly, that France is suffering under "*une malaise et un mécontentement*" that is not justified by circumstances. "*Les salons de Paris*", or rather the conversation that passes therein, he thinks the cause of this. He assigns this discontent entirely to the position which Prussia has taken and which has aroused, or rather revived, the ancient animosity of the French towards her. I opine that he lays too much stress on one point, and that he must look further for the disquietude which no doubt is felt. The Mexican affair, the Papal question, and the uncertainty which reigns in regard to the future must be taken into account in assigning causes for the misgivings of the French nation.

I told the Emperor as much, and I said that as far as I could judge (though he must be better informed than I could pretend to be of the state of public opinion) if it was felt that mistakes had been made, it was also felt that those mistakes were acknowledged, and were not persisted in. Moreover, there was a general satisfaction that the late crisis had not involved France in war, and a general desire for the preservation of peace.

The Emperor replied that intentions were attributed to him which had not the least foundation in truth. It was said that he was only tiding over the exhibition to go to war. Rumours of this kind, together with the insinuations of the

German press that France would be obliged to restore Alsace and Lorraine to Germany, were doing incredible mischief, and although he believed that the desire for peace existed generally, there was no answering for the consequences of the excitement which their discussion might produce. He then defended the course which he had followed during the German war. There had been no occasion for France to interfere, and he saw no occasion for France to consider herself humiliated by the results.

I said that so far from French interests having been hurt by these results, I had always held the opinion, and had expressed it as Her Majesty's representative at Frankfort as far back as 1848-9, when the first attempts at German unity were made, that the accomplishment of it would be a blessing for France, as it would put an end to those aspirations for conquest which from time to time unsettled the mind of the French nation—that France was quite strong enough for her own welfare and for the happiness of Europe, that what I feared more than anything else was the sudden rage for armaments which seemed to possess everyone, that people would at last revolt under the expense which they were the first to encourage now, and that there would be at last an ungovernable craving for war to put an end to it by deciding who was the strongest. I observed that I could say as much without giving offence, for the feeling in favour of armaments seemed to be as strong in England as elsewhere. I then asked His Majesty whether a conclusion had been arrived at by the military commission over which he presided.

He replied that he had formed a plan which he hoped would be successful, that it was based on defensive and not on offensive principles, and framed so as to obtain the greatest number of men at the least possible expense. He said that it was the superior military organization of Prussia which had counted in the late war. Austria, in fact, had been in the same position as he had found himself during the war in Italy with a formidable army on paper which dwindled to nothing when put to the test of activity. At no one moment in Italy had he had above 110,000 effective men. At the battle

of Solferino he had not 95,000 combatants, and the utmost that could have been sent him in the way of recruits would have been 20,000 more, and yet the French army was then supposed to amount, with the reserves which had been called out, to 600,000 men. He went into a number of statistics to show the reasons for this, with which I need not trouble you, and he said that his present scheme would give him a million of men, the greater part of which, however, would be a reserve which would only be used for defensive purposes. The annual contingent furnished at present was 100,000 men. He proposed to raise it to 180,000, half to be embodied in the active army, half in the Reserve. Those intended for the Reserve would be partially drilled without leaving their homes. After a certain number of years' service, they would form part of what he called *La Garde Nationale Mobile*, but would still remain at home, being only called out annually for a few weeks' drill. . . .

I found the Emperor had received news of the abdication of Maximilian, or at all events of his intention to abdicate. It is supposed, or perhaps, known, though it is not avowed, that the intention of Maximilian has been to proceed to Europe without abdicating, leaving Bazaine to manage matters in Mexico as he best could, and that the latter had declared to Maximilian that he must either abdicate or remain in Mexico, and that this has been the cause of the French evacuation of Mexico.

The Emperor told me last night a story somewhat different from Moustier's of the late communications with the United States. It would seem, according to the Emperor's account, that when it was found necessary to keep the whole of the French troops in Mexico until the period for its final evacuation, the United States Government were informed of the change of plans, but without being told positively that the evacuation would be completed in March next. There was, therefore, some ground for suspicion on their part and Mr. Bigelow was ordered to present a note to the French Government demanding explanations. This note was so impudent in tone that Mr. Bigelow was informed it would be answered in corresponding terms, upon which

the offensive note was, by orders from Washington, withdrawn.

With regard to Italian affairs, the Emperor appeared more satisfied. He said that the last accounts led him to hope that the departure of his troops would pass off quietly. He had been obliged, however, to give the Pope assurances that, in case of disorders in Rome, he would again give his protection.

"The fact is," said His Majesty, "my position is detestable. For eighteen years I have been the Pope's mainstay and now I have all the appearance of abandoning him. If anything was to go wrong, I should be obliged to go to his assistance, '*quitte à m'en aller le lendemain.*'"

I observed that His Majesty would do much better to leave the Italians to take care of the Pope. He replied that it was that the Pope most dreaded.

Compiègne, 13th December, 1866.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

I am afraid that the Empress is bent on going to Rome. Yesterday it was all settled that she should go and it was to be announced to the Council of Ministers assembled here to-day, but nothing was said to them, and it is possible that the wind has again changed, but my impression is that she will go. I have had more than one conversation with her upon the subject of the affairs of Rome and Italy, and as the devil is never so black as he is painted (*proh pudor!* that I should make use of such a similitude in speaking of a lady !) she is much more reasonable than I had expected. If she laments the abandonment of the Pope, she at all events admits the necessity of it, and thinks the Emperor right in having withdrawn his troops. But if she looks upon the retreat as a necessary political move, she considers it as involving a complete rupture with the clergy in this country which has until now been favourable to the Empire. I tell her that it needed not this final step to excite the animosity of the clergy—that animosity, for what it is worth, had long been aroused, but that she might be assured of one thing,

that if it should ever become necessary to choose between the Empire and another revolution, the clergy would know on which side their interests lay.

What the Empress is to effect in Rome, I cannot understand. She says that her dread is lest in a moment of weakness the Pope should take to flight, and I suppose she hopes to inspire him with confidence. Perhaps, also, it is a sop to the clerical party here. But after all in her position she can hardly undertake this journey without having some ostensible object in view, and if she fails, how unseemly will become her position.

She says that the Pope has a right to complain of the Emperor : for what has the protection of France wrought ? The spoliation of papal territory. Had the Emperor left the Pope to his natural friends, Austria, Naples, and Tuscany, his rights would have been secure, but having deprived him of these friends, the Emperor now withdraws his own protection, and leaves the Pope to his fate. At the same time, the Empress admits that large temporal possessions are neither desirable nor necessary for the Pope. But he ought to be left in a position perfectly independent.

I said when she made these observations to me that the Italian Government seemed fully disposed to recognize his independence, and not only to respect but to cause it to be respected. She replied that the Government might not be strong enough to carry through its own policy, and there might be disturbances in Rome in spite of their wishes to prevent them. I said that in that case nothing would be easier than to send Italian troops to restore order, withdrawing them as soon as tranquillity should be established. She admitted that this would be the best course to take but intimated that the Pope would leave Rome on the first appearance of an Italian soldier.

I make no excuse for giving you this long exposition of the Empress's views and sayings. There is no knowing what part she may yet play in these affairs. As far as I know, every member of the Emperor's Government is against this projected journey. It is extraordinary that he should permit it.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

19th December, 1866.

Living as much as I do in a Court and Government atmosphere, I always mistrust my own judgment when called upon to exercise it in internal affairs. I can only say now that I see no signs for any apprehension or disturbance, though it is impossible for me not to remark that the Emperor no longer holds that high place in public opinion which the first years of his reign had given him.

But the feeling which pervades the nation appears to me much more one of grief and dejection than of animosity to the Emperor. People think the future dark and uncertain, and they have no longer confidence in the Emperor's judgment or his star, whichever it may be, but as to there being any widespread disaffection against the Empire as a form of Government or a general desire for a change, I don't believe it. No doubt the aggrandizement of Prussia has created discontent, and all the intrigues of the clerical party have been set on foot to prevent the evacuation of Rome—but these are now "*des faits accomplis*" which the French nation will soon forget for no nation in the world is so little stable of purpose. The Mexican question is more serious, because there is mixed up with it the losses sustained by the public who subscribed to the Mexican loan, and the bill for French intervention, a large part of which has still to be paid. What the new measure for the reorganization of the army may produce, it would be premature to determine. . . .

The Empress told Clarendon this afternoon (of course, this is quite confidential) that her journey to Rome depended upon the answer to a letter which she had written to the Pope.

Mr. Julian Fane¹ to Lord Stanley

24th December, 1866.

The contemplated visit of the Empress to the Pope has been, it is hoped, finally renounced.

Her Majesty's strong personal bias in favour of this visit has been counteracted by the representations of those who

¹ Chargé d'Affaires at Paris.

have pointed out to her the false construction which might be put upon it ; the inference which might be drawn that she was acting in direct opposition to the policy of the Emperor in Italy, and the subsequent embarrassment which might be entailed upon the Imperial Government. The Empress at first warmly combated the arguments employed to dissuade Her Majesty from taking this step. The great body of French Roman Catholics, she said, believed the Pope to be in danger, and it would be grateful to them to know that at such a moment their Empress had hastened to the side of His Holiness. Moreover, Her Majesty had already proposed to pay this visit to the Pope and, if the Holy Father accepted the proposal as one which would afford him consolation, she would feel bound by His Holiness's wishes in the matter.

It was pointed out to the Empress that her visit to Rome would be the measure best calculated to excite hostile demonstrations against the Pope the moment that Her Majesty left Rome, and that as to making her decision depend upon the Pope's reply to her proposal, it was easy to see that His Holiness could not in common courtesy reject that proposal, even if he deemed it likely to entail embarrassment upon himself. It was, therefore, hardly responsible for a step upon which Her Majesty ought to take a decision based on general considerations of policy.

It appears that these arguments have at last prevailed. Among those who urged them, it is said, with the greatest success is Lord Clarendon.

Mr. Julian Fane¹ to Lord Stanley

25th December, 1866.

I am informed by a person who had the honour of conversing with the Empress the day before yesterday respecting the abandonment of her contemplated visit to the Pope, that Her Majesty, to his surprise, displayed but little mortification at having to forego that favourite project. My informant attributes this disposition on Her Majesty's part to the conviction she had at last acquired that even her

¹ Charge d'Affaires at Paris.

influence would prove of no avail in bringing His Holiness to open negotiations on civil and political subjects with the Italian Government.

Mr. Julian Fane¹ to Lord Stanley

28th December, 1866.

Secret and Confidential.

During a visit which Count Goltz paid to Compiègne last month, the Emperor took an opportunity of expressing his desire to conclude with Prussia a convention for guaranteeing the temporal power of the Pope. Count Goltz submitted this proposal to his Government, and Count Bismarck courteously but decisively rejected it. These facts having come to the knowledge of the Italian Government, they addressed some sort of protest on the subject to General Fleury, which led to his being authorized to telegraph to say that the project was altogether abandoned.

It is thought not improbable that the idea of concluding this convention with Prussia suddenly suggested itself to the Emperor and that His Majesty acted impulsively on it, without previous consultation with his Ministers.

¹ Chargé d'Affaires at Paris.

VI

THE LUXEMBOURG INCIDENT

AFTER Sadowa the peace of Europe depended on the attitude of Prussia, and the politics of Bismarck. His cunning is very well illustrated in the incident of Luxembourg, a territory which he appeared to offer to Napoleon III, only to threaten war the minute Napoleon III seemed to entertain the offer. The essentials of the affair were long kept quiet, but here, through the discretion of Lord Cowley, they are made open and finally we see the situation which succeeded the incident and can judge the situation as it appeared to a number of shrewd observers before the fresh machinations of Bismarck in Madrid put the French into a position which they were not unreasonable in regarding as intolerable.

* *Count Goltz to Count Bismarck*

2nd April, 1867.

Confidential.

To-day I have had the honour of handing His Majesty the King's letter to the Emperor. Whilst he was reading it he gave me a detailed telegraphic *résumé* of Your Excellency's answer to the Bennigsen question to study, and, since this took longer to read than the King's letter, naturally the conversation opened on the Luxembourg incident.

The Emperor observed it was impossible to answer the question better than Your Excellency has done, and he is very pleased with your reply. At the same time he did not conceal his intense anxiety at the turn this incident has taken. If the King of the Netherlands signs the proposed

agreement, over which both sides are unanimous—and news that he has done so is expected at any moment—and if we then refuse to evacuate Luxemburg, the Emperor does not know how war can be avoided. However, he has dealt with the matter from the first in concert with Your Excellency and has done everything you advised.

At this point I interposed with contradictory information, and an explanation of what has happened both here and at The Hague. In this I adhered closely to the guidance of Your Excellency's confidential correspondence, Nos. 229 and 239 of 30th and 31st March, and also denounced the proposed proceedings concerning Luxemburg, with the aid of material contained in the letters sent me from there.

The Emperor defended himself with M. Benedetti's report of Your Excellency's words, which he claims to be entirely in agreement with the confidential letter of the Marquis de Moustier of 4th March. When I contested the accuracy of these communications, the Emperor replied that it was only a case of a few immaterial details. On the other hand he insisted that he was in a position to refute any statements concerning the King of the Netherlands, the communications from Luxemburg, their recent publication, and the important effect which all this would have on German opinion. Finally he remarked that recrimination would not help us now. What was needed was to examine the position, and to devise a means by which war could be avoided. I am well aware how strongly public opinion in France was roused by last year's events, how steadfastly the Emperor has opposed this disposition towards war with Prussia, and the infinite pains he has taken to soothe his people. Also the dread of a unified Germany which exists in this country has not escaped me. France fears that Alsace and Lorraine will be wrenched from her. In her opinion this would be foolish, preposterous; but it must be taken into account. In itself the Luxemburg incident is of no very grave importance; but its solution in accordance with French wishes would dispel all these anxieties.

For my part I acquainted the Emperor with the state of public opinion in Germany. I told him we were not disposed

to compromise our national status. Germany is undergoing a transformation, and in consequence her national consciousness is more than usually developed. I was able to quote two prominent merchants of Cologne, who are engaged officially at the Exhibition—men who, by a war with France, would stand to lose everything—but who declare that the evacuation of the fortress of Luxemburg by the Prussians in favour of France is simply unthinkable. General opinion would see in it merely a foretaste of increased demands, and would prefer to fight the war which such covetousness made inevitable at once, instead of some two years later. I explained how, by a single aggressive move in this comparatively insignificant incident, he might wreck the results of his many years of prudent diplomacy which have obliterated the tragic memories of the first Empire, and, whatever the outcome of the war might be, would bequeath to his son a legacy of German hatred.

The Emperor assured me that he is not deceiving himself, and that he in no way underestimates the dangers of a war against Prussia and the whole of Germany. But could I not suggest some means by which he could quit himself of his predicament honourably? Both parties are in the position of a pair of friends who have quarrelled at a café; each feels himself in honour bound to fight a duel with a man he is genuinely fond of.

I told the Emperor that the simplest thing was not to close with the King of the Netherlands. When the Emperor objected that France could not possibly back out of an agreement which she had herself suggested, I observed that perhaps on closer investigation, the King might discover that this questionable transaction would deal far too sharp a blow at his reputation. I also drew his attention to a London telegram, according to which the official newspaper at The Hague definitely denies the report that an agreement has been concluded. The Emperor had noticed it. But it was easy to see that he was reluctant to contribute personally to the breaking off of the negotiations.

He remarked that we might have consulted the Powers concerned in the treaty; but we could scarcely do that after

we had paid so little attention to the treaty in Denmark. I replied that in my opinion such a consultation was most expedient, if we were to arrive at a quiet and well-considered decision. Once we were all seated round a green table I thought it most improbable that we should set Europe in a blaze over such a comparative trifle. In conclusion I urged the Emperor to avoid a *fait accompli*, to delay the formal signature—or, at the very least, to add a suspensory clause by which its operation should depend upon the ratification of Prussia, or upon the verdict of a European council. In the meantime the whole matter should be denied publicly, and the partial agreement already reached should be kept strictly secret.

The Emperor promised to consider the matter very carefully. Although he referred several times during our conversation to the possibility of war, and, indeed, to an imminent and very probable war, his manner throughout remained unusually cordial.

I am convinced that he is desperately anxious to avoid war; only he does not know how to manage it without exposing himself to a severe political defeat.

Only at the close of the interview did he revert to the King's letter, for which he expressed the warmest gratitude. He evidently attaches the greatest importance to the approaching visits of the King and the Emperor of Russia.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

4th April, 1867.

(Goltz who had had a big task with the Emperor repeated an account of it to Cowley. He said) "that the Emperor had received him with great personal kindness, but had given him to understand that there was no option for him between the possession of Luxembourg and war. Goltz endeavoured to show His Majesty that war for such a small affair as Luxembourg would be a pity on both sides. The Emperor did not dissent, but likened the position of France and Prussia to two friends, who happen to disagree in a café and find themselves obliged to fight, they don't exactly know why."

* *The Emperor Napoleon III to King William I*

Paris, 8th March, 1867.

Monsieur mon Frère,

It has given me great pleasure to hear that Your Majesty proposes to come to Paris for the Exhibition. It will give us great satisfaction to see you here again and I have no doubt that this meeting will serve to draw our respective countries still closer together. I hope that Your Majesty will give us the pleasure of staying with us at the Tuileries where we shall be most happy to welcome you.

* *Prince Metternich to Baron Beust*

Paris, 16th March, 1867.

I gathered from the Empress that things were going badly in regard to Prussia. She told me :—

“I was sure that our Prussians were mistaken and that they have no intention of giving in.”

The details which the Empress gave me about the neutralization of a Rhine zone and the dismantling of the fortress of Luxemburg are no longer to the point now that the cession of the whole province of Luxemburg is in question. The Empress did not want to tell me exactly what was going on but she gave me to understand that they were very much annoyed with Prussia. She made one very sound remark on the attitude of France towards Prussia : “We are not grumbling, for a great nation should not complain until she is ready to act.”

She added that military preparations were proceeding on a grand scale and she hoped that everything would be ready by the end of the year.

I told you in my cyphered report of 4th March what she said about you and about Austria. I was quite touched by the interest she takes in us and above all in our august Master for whom she has the most profound veneration.

On this occasion she told me how she had had to defend the Emperor because he had not himself commanded the army in Bohemia, and she had succeeded triumphantly. She had said that the Emperor had given a striking proof

of devotion and sacrifice to his country by leaving in command the General who had the confidence of the nation.

I wanted to go and see the Emperor but she dissuaded me as she said he was worried, both about affairs of State and also by the indisposition of his son. I might find him rather morose and unapproachable.

If I am not mistaken the Empress feels that war with Prussia is inevitable, sooner or later, and that both sides are playing for position.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

7th April, 1867.

This afternoon the Emperor sent for me. On my going to the Tuileries, His Majesty said that he wished to speak to me on the present critical state of affairs, and to explain to me more particularly that it had not been brought about by any fault of his, but that he had been completely mystified by Bismarck. His Majesty then recounted to me the events of the last eight months very much in the language of Moustier, which I have reported to you. Trusting to the assurances given by Bismarck, he had gone into negotiations with Holland which had been successful, only to find that Bismarck had played him false.

Such being the case, the irritation against Germany had arrived at a pitch which was getting beyond control, alarm had got possession of the public mind, and unless some satisfaction was given to France, he could not say to what extremities it might be driven. It had been suggested to him that an appeal might be made to the Great Powers. He was most anxious to maintain the peace of Europe, and if the Great Powers could prevail on Prussia to give him satisfaction, or could suggest any mode of settling this question, he would be glad to adopt it.

My object was to find out, without committing myself, and still less you, what would be deemed a satisfaction. I first said very much what I had stated to La Valette as to the uselessness of recurring to the past while we were forcibly obliged to consider the question as it now stood, and I asked His Majesty whether the King of Holland had announced

to him that he had withdrawn from the negotiations respecting the sale of the Grand Duchy. The Emperor declared that he had nothing of the kind from the King, but that the Dutch Government had declared that *they* withdrew from the negotiations. He considered the question with the King to be merely suspended. But on the other hand, he had learnt that the Prussian Government refused to evacuate the fortress, and thus the question stood at the present moment.

I went on to say that any appeal to the Great Powers would be worse than useless unless there was some possibility of agreeing in opinion as to the advice they would offer, supposing them to accept the proposal if offered. What then was it that His Majesty actually wanted? After a great deal of questioning it came to this: that Luxemburg should be made over to the Grand Duke (Prussia withdrawing her garrison from the fortress), and to Luxemburg troops.

I could not get a distinct answer as to the guarantee to be given, whether France was to come into possession, or not, after the withdrawal of the Prussians, but as in reply to a suggestion I made that the fortress might be razed so as to be neither a defence for, nor a menace against, either party, the Emperor said he could not consent to that: I infer that he means that the Prussians should make over Luxemburg to the Grand Duke and that the latter should then be free to conclude his bargain with France.

The object of His Majesty in sending for me was, I think, to sound how far Her Majesty's Government, whom he conceives to be friendly inclined towards him, might be disposed to propose this arrangement to Prussia. He did not ask me this, but he intimated that I was to tell you what had passed between us, and that you might see whether anything could be done.

Before taking leave of His Majesty, I begged him not to take any rash or decisive step. I said that he must not deceive himself—that the national spirit in Germany was quite as much up as in France, and that a war between the nations, commenced upon such a question as this, would become a war of nationality in which the cause of quarrel would soon be forgotten, and nothing but hatred and extermination thought of.

The Emperor assured me that he had no intention of taking any immediate steps, but he was afraid, he said, of the violence of the Press and of interpellations in the Chambers.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

8th April, 1867.

The Emperor did me the honour to desire to see me yesterday afternoon. On arriving in His Majesty's presence, he said that he wished to speak to me on the actual state of affairs, and more particularly to explain, that it was from no fault of his that the present complication with Prussia had arisen, but that he had been completely mystified by the Prussian Government.

At the close of the German war last year, His Majesty continued, seeing the irritation which prevailed in the country against Prussia, an irritation arising quite as much from apprehensions of what Prussia might still try to effect as from dissatisfaction at what she had effected, he had sent for Count Goltz, and had told him that unless something was done by Prussia to appease this irritation, the amicable relations which existed between France and Prussia might be seriously compromised and had suggested that, as the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg was more French than German, the fortress itself having been constructed by Vauban, the fortress and territory should be made over to France. The maintenance of a Prussian garrison in that fortress was a menace to France. In the hands of France, the fortress would merely add to the defences. His Majesty's suggestion had been conveyed by Goltz to M. de Bismarck and had been favourably received by that Minister—so favourably, indeed, that on the question arising how the King of Holland was to be indemnified for the loss which would accrue to him by the contemplated arrangement, Count Bismarck had said that there were certain estates which belonged to the King of Prussia (the Emperor had forgotten their situation) the transfer of which to the King of Holland he would endeavour to arrange with His Prussian Majesty. M. de Bismarck had fallen ill while these preliminary communications were passing between the two governments, but the subject had

been renewed after his convalescence when he stated that he had found difficulties in the way of the compensation to the King of Holland, which he had indicated, but that the French Government should endeavour to come to some preliminary arrangement with the King of Holland, and that he, M. de Bismarck, would, in order to aid the negotiation, press the Dutch Government on the question of Luxemburg, and so make them more desirous of humiliating the French Government. And so well, continued the Emperor, had M. de Bismarck fulfilled his promise that, as His Majesty's Government knew as well as he, the Dutch Government had applied both to England and to France for protection against the presumed hostile intentions of Prussia.

His Majesty then alluded to other facts connected with M. de Bismarck's conduct, which had already been related to me by M. de Moustier, and are known to your Lordship, and he concluded by saying that he had a right to assume that he had been mystified by Prussia—whether intentionally or not, he did not presume to say. . . .

The Emperor proceeded to say that he was most anxious for the preservation of peace, but that the state of public opinion in France was such that matters could not remain for any length of time in their present uncertain state. He had heard that Prussia had applied to the Powers who had signed the Treaty of Separation between Holland and Belgium in 1839, for their opinions as to the value of the guarantee therein given with regard to the position of Luxemburg. If the Powers could devise any arrangement which the French Government could honourably accept he should be most happy to agree to it. He believed that he could count upon the friendly sentiments of Her Majesty's Government.

I said that Her Majesty's Government would most willingly contribute, as far as their duty would permit them, their assistance for the maintenance of peace, and I then endeavoured to ascertain from His Majesty the minimum of the terms which he would accept. I said, therefore, that in my humble opinion His Majesty must discard as much as possible from his thoughts the transactions of the past and look at them as they actually existed. There were always

two sides to a question, and probably Prussia would have her story to tell as well as France. What was patent was this—let the fault of it be where it might, the national feeling in Germany was quite as strong, the irritation in Germany quite as great as in France, and M. de Bismarck, whatever his intentions might be, was not in a position to place France in possession of the fortress of Luxemburg. . . .

Before leaving His Majesty, I ventured to express the hope that he would take no step in a hurry. A false move, I observed, might render war inevitable, and I know that His Majesty must recoil from the contemplation of a war which, begun upon an imaginary point of honour, would degenerate into one of hatred between two nations, and the results of which, whatever they might be, could never be commensurate with the misery which such a war must inflict.

His Majesty was again pleased to assure me that he was most anxious that peace should be maintained, and he admitted that the question at issue was not in itself of that importance which could justify a recourse to arms. The susceptibility of the nation, however, had been excited by the course which events had taken and therein lay the danger.

* *Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley*

Paris, 12th April, 1867.

The King of the Belgians sent for me this morning and said that he wished to give me an account of a conversation which he had had yesterday with the Emperor in taking leave of His Majesty. The King expressed himself as not only gratified with the Emperor's kind expressions towards himself, but at his pacific and conciliatory language in general. The Emperor said that he was sincerely desirous for the maintenance of peace, and that provided some satisfaction was given him, he was ready to make every possible concession to preserve it. He had abandoned all idea of acquiring Luxemburg. He did not wish for any augmentation of territory elsewhere; his honour, however, requires that the Prussians should consent to evacuate the fortress of Luxemburg, that must be done or war was inevitable.

With regard to the Grand Duchy, it might remain in the

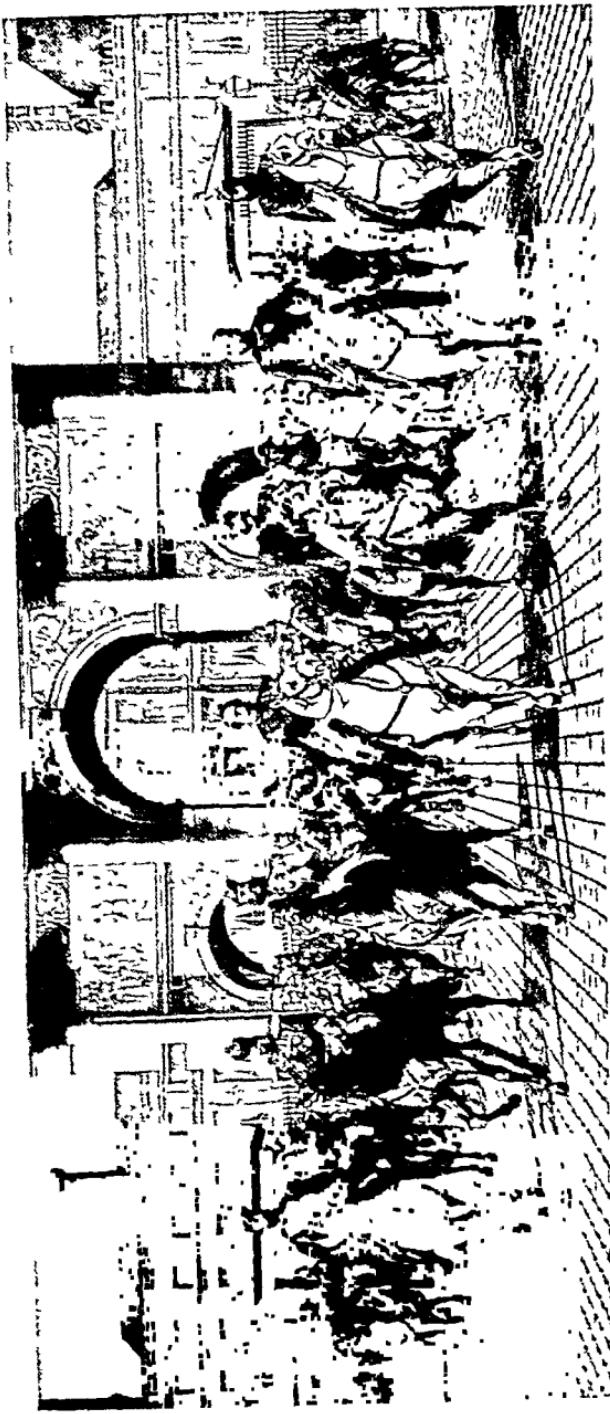
hands of the Grand Duke, be declared neutral, and the fortress destroyed ; or it might be given to Belgium. He should make no opposition. The Emperor said further, that although he hoped for peace, he was making every possible preparation for war—that 1,000 breach-loaders were making per day—horses were being bought, etc., etc.

The Emperor then asked the King what Belgium would do in the event of war. The King replied, " Maintain a strict and loyal neutrality." " But if the Prussians attack you," said the Emperor, " what will you do ? " " Defend ourselves as best we can until our allies, not doubting that Your Majesty will be among them, can come to our assistance."

The Emperor then inquired, remarking on the value of the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, whether Belgium would be disposed to enter into a customs union with France. The King declared it to be impossible, and on the Emperor inquiring the reason, remarked that a small country could not afford to put all her material interests in the hands of a powerful neighbour and declined all further conversation upon the subject, remarking that as a constitutional Sovereign he could not entertain such questions in the absence of his Ministers. The Emperor does not seem to have taken the refusal amiss.

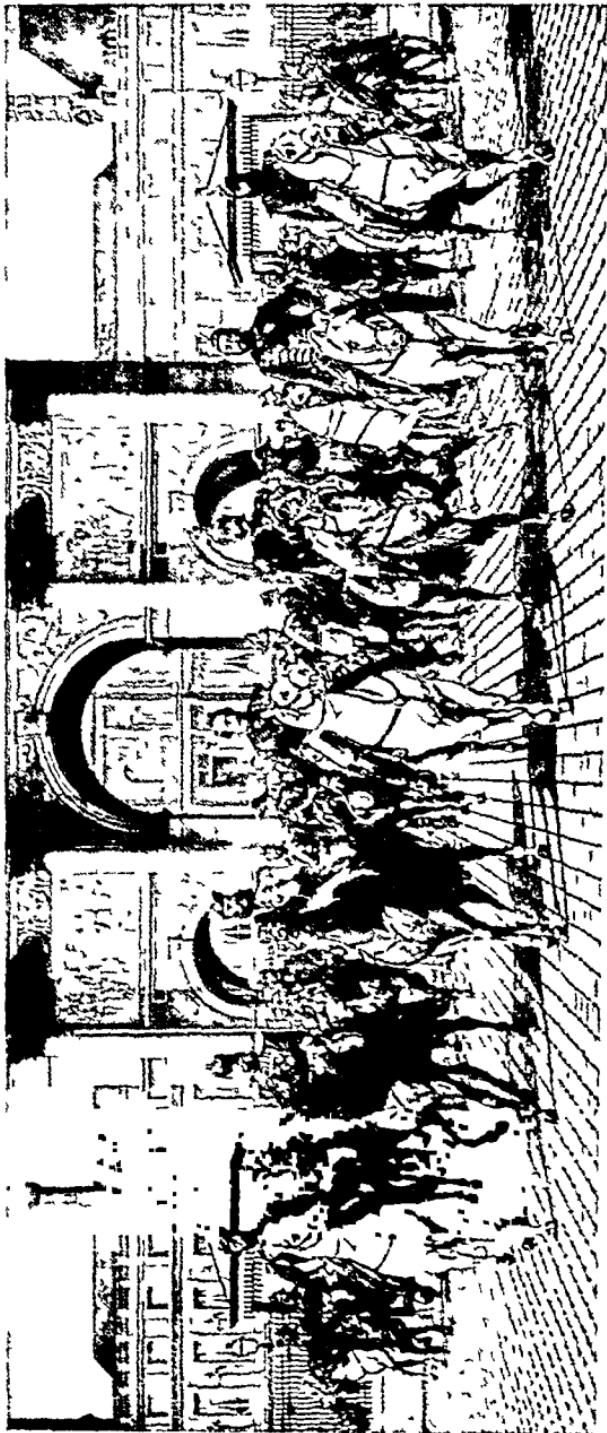
Some conversation then took place concerning the Belgian press, the Emperor remarking that it was not only "*mauvaise mais brutale*". The King did not attempt to deny that this was perfectly true, but remarked that the very brutality of some of the papers prevented their sale. His Majesty expressed regret that such papers should exist, but said that he had no power to put them down. It must be done legally. He then remarked that he had also reason to complain of a part of the French press (naming some of the papers) which were exceedingly hostile to Belgium and exciting his subjects to revolt.

The conversation then turned on other matters—such as the exhibition, the embellishment of Paris, etc., which enabled the King to pass some just encomiums on the great and useful works that the Emperor had accomplished. On taking leave of the King, the Emperor expressed the hope



THE SOVEREIGNS RIDING OUT FROM THE TUILERIES FOR THE EXHIBITION OF 1867

From the painting by Ponson at Malmaison



THE SOVIETIANS RIDING OUT FROM THE TUILLERIES FOR THE EXHIBITION OF 1867

From the painting by Porion at Malmatson

frontier. The intention of Moustier's despatch was to say no more than that France insisted on no more than the evacuation of the fortress.

The Emperor went on to say : " My position is becoming hourly more difficult—I wish sincerely to maintain peace. I wish to forget the past and to look at matters as they present themselves to-day. I had the engagement of the King of Holland to cede to me the Duchy of Luxemburg. I might almost say that I had the consent of Count Bismarck. It was not an augmentation of territory that I was seeking, but a satisfaction to France in the acquisition of a fortress which in the hands of Prussia, after the events of last year, had become a menacing position. An enemy in the possession of Luxemburg might reach Nancy without difficulty. I will not now examine whether I was right or wrong in the way taken to obtain this satisfaction for France. Suffice it to say that I am now willing to abandon everything but the departure of the Prussians. Do what you like with the fortress—leave it to Holland, or give it to Belgium, neutralize it or raze it—but do what you can to obtain this concession from Prussia, or I become powerless and war is inevitable."

I asked His Majesty whether the Austrian Government had not made proposals at Berlin in the sense suggested by His Majesty. He replied that he had no knowledge of them, but that Moustier had addressed himself to Austria and Russia as neutral Powers, at the same time that England had been applied to.

I then asked His Majesty whether he conscientiously believed that if the Prussian Government could be induced to make the concession asked for, peace would be assured. I had good reason to believe that the Prussian Government was under the conviction that concessions would only produce a temporary lull and that France was only conciliatory now because she was not ready. The Emperor replied that if this question was settled, he was convinced that there would be no further danger of war.

The Emperor again urging his hope that Her Majesty's Government would employ their influence at Berlin to obtain this satisfaction for him, I asked whether I was to understand

* that His Majesty wished or asked Her Majesty's Government to undertake the office of mediator—because, I said, in that case Prussia must be a consenting party. The Emperor replied that he did not look to terms or expressions, but what he desired was that Her Majesty's Government should endeavour to come to some understanding with the Governments of Austria and Russia to advise Prussia to settle the Luxembourg question amicably.

His Majesty then asked me whether I thought that, in the event of hostilities, Prussia would violate the neutrality of Belgium. His Majesty evinced great anxiety on this point because he said that it was the most vulnerable side of France. I could only express my doubts of Prussia taking in any way the initiative in hostilities. There was, I said, at present no *casus belli* for her, and she would hardly provoke the anger of the other Powers by a wanton attack on Belgium. The Emperor said that Austria and Russia were not likely to meddle with her and she might perhaps count on the listlessness of England. I merely observed that England was not generally listless in fulfilling her engagements.

* *Prince Metternich to Baron Beust*

Paris, 18th April, 1867.

The account which M. de Moustier gave me of his conversation with the Emperor was so confused and unsatisfactory that I went at once to the Tuileries.

The Emperor received me very cordially and consented to tell me exactly what was in his thoughts.

He began by telling me the history of the confidential conversations which have been taking place since August of last year between France and Prussia.

He avers that it is M. de Bismarck who has raised the question of Luxembourg and that he has also indicated the lines on which an arrangement should be made between France and the King of Holland.

As no opportunity to do this had presented itself and M. de Bismarck had given no signs of life for seven months, the Emperor had instructed M. Benedetti to take soundings. The reply was :—

The Emperor begged me to let you know this at once so that you should confine yourself to putting forward your first proposal. If you can succeed in getting it accepted at Berlin, the Emperor and all France would be so grateful to you that it would draw our respective countries still closer together. The Emperor does not say that in no circumstances would he consider your second suggestion. When the moment comes for deciding what to do about Luxemburg, then will be the time when the question can perhaps be raised without causing the inconvenience it would at present.

In any case the Emperor would be satisfied with the evacuation of the fortress of Luxemburg, and he did not conceal from me that in the long run the French would not suffer the Germans to remain in possession.

* *Prince Metternich to Baron Beust*

Paris, 18th April, 1867.

In my reports of to-day's date I have sent you the news as it has been told to me but I have been unable to call your attention to the trend of affairs.

Your neutral and eminently pacific attitude has inspired confidence here. M. de Moustier is much less reserved, and I am convinced that the Emperor is much better pleased with our policy than his Minister has deigned to tell me.

From what the Emperor insinuated to me the day before yesterday, and the Empress said straight out, I can see that Gramont will come back to Vienna with a mass of indiscreet questions, highly characteristic of him.

They are beginning to feel our strength in the midst of all these complications, present and future. As my friend and colleague, Mr. More, said to me this morning : "They have a vague feeling that we are destined to play a great part and our increasing power becomes daily more evident. 'Like the buds in Spring!'"

I thanked my colleague for his poetic simile which I felt was abundantly justified.

Yes, we are growing all the time, and any Austrian who does not give you the credit for it is most ungrateful. We all

The Emperor was pleased to send for me again yesterday afternoon. His Majesty again said that he wished to speak with him the next day. I expressed some surprise at this question, remarking that I was not aware that any proposals had been made by His Majesty's order to Her Majesty's Government. The Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne had, I said, read to your Lordship a despatch from M. de Molostier, pacific in tone but representing the present situation to be full of danger, asking Her Majesty's Government to use their best efforts to prevent the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne from doing so.

19th April, 1867.

Lord Colley to Lord Stanley

You may expect, my dear friend, every kind of suggestion from M. de Gramont, I warn you of that. The few words I had with him the other evening convinced me that he and the Emperor had far-reaching schemes for the future. I will not bore you further with the plans the Emperor laid before me. There was nothing serious about them except the difficulty she had in finding enough spoils of victory to go round.

I will not bore you further with the plans the Emperor laid before me. There was nothing serious about them except the difficulty she had in finding enough spoils of victory to go round.

But I absolutely refused to follow her into her dreams of Castles in Spain. I told her that this time I would not play her game of speculating on the future. And I would not take we will do.

an alliance with France in case of a war".

to know at all costs " what Austria would stand to gain from that there is something uniquely about that map. She wanted often consulted and then rejected—and which has fortunately been stolen from her. I say fortunately, because I am sure

that the Emperor went very far this time. She would have

compensate us for the blood and tears we split last year.

feel it and it comes as a consolation from Providence to

which peace might be preserved, though excluding none, should they be offered.

[Lord Stanley had himself proposed three different solutions of the Luxembourg question : (1) To give Luxembourg to Belgium, Belgium in return ceding to France an amount of territory on the Franco-Belgian frontier, which would be equal to the addition given. (2) To raze the fortress altogether. (3) To make over the fortress of Luxembourg to the troops of the Grand Duke, declaring the territory neutral. Moustier consented to settle the argument on one of these issues.]

The Emperor went on to say that his own position was a very simple one. Whether rightly or wrongly, for reasons that His Majesty had already explained to me, he had considered that the cession of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to France would have been a means of calming the irritation and alarm which the successes of Prussia had aroused in the French nation, and would have laid the foundation of amicable relations between France and Germany. He had subjected this cession to three conditions : the consent of the Grand Duke, the acquiescence of the populations, and the consultation of the interests of Europe. The first condition had been realized ; the second there had been no opportunity of establishing, but His Majesty did not doubt of the sympathy of the Luxembourg population for annexation to France ; the third under present circumstances could not be enquired into, but His Majesty might almost affirm that he had received the consent of Count Bismarck, the representative of one of the Powers the most interested in the question. Notwithstanding the moral strength of his position, His Majesty was ready to abandon, for the preservation of peace, all the advantages which he had thus obtained, to relinquish the annexation of the Grand Duchy to France, and to limit his demand to satisfying the honour of France, which he conceived was, after all that had occurred, aggrieved by the continuance of a Prussian garrison in the fortress.

"Let that garrison be withdrawn," said His Majesty, "on what conditions you please. Give the fortress over to the Grand Ducal troops declaring the country neutral. Cede the Grand Duchy to Belgium, or destroy the fortress

I then observed to His Majesty that apprehensions appereared to be entertained in Prussia that France was bent upon war with that country, and was only seeking to gain time for further preparations, and that any concessions which Prussia could make would only weaken her own position without ensuring a permanent peace, and I asked His Majesty whether he could conscientiously assure me that in the supposition that Prussia would consent to some such arrangement as he had pointed out, the blessings of a permanent peace would be assured. His Majesty replied that his firm belief was that, if the satisfaction which he had indicated between the task of mediating before that French and Prussian Governments, observing that before that could be done that he wished Her Majesty's Government to undertake to understand His Majesty whether I was to understand that through His Majesty's Government could exercise at Berlin, I asked His Majesty whether I was to understand that he wished Her Majesty's Government to some influence which His Majesty again advertising to the salutary influence which he thought His Majesty's Government could exercise at Berlin for the preservation of peace. Whether this was at Berlin for the purpose of exercising their joint influence and Russia, for the purpose of exercising their joint influence and might come to some understanding with those of Austria terms. His notion was that Her Majesty's Government The Emperor replied that he was not master of diplomatic Prussia must be a consenting party.

to be done officially or confidentially was immaterial to him. He spoke only in the interests of peace.

The Emperor seems to be under the impression that Prussia will commence hostilities, and His Majesty asked me whether I thought it possible that the Prussian Army would violate the neutrality of Belgium in order to attack France on her most vulnerable side. I said that I could hardly conceive that Prussia, under present circumstances, would meditate any aggressive movement at all, still less that she would put herself in the wrong with the great Powers by the invasion of a country whose neutrality was guaranteed by them. The Emperor said that if he was not attacked, he would commence a war, but His Majesty still assumed that Prussia would be the aggressor, and that her attack would be made by way of Belgium, as she would reason that in all probability neither Austria nor Russia would attempt to punish any such violation of international engagements, and that even England would hold aloof, seeing how little disposed Her Majesty's Government was to take any part in the affairs of the day.

I observed that there was a great difference between abstaining from interference in affairs which did not immediately concern us, and the fulfilment of engagements which we had contracted.

On taking leave of me, the Emperor again expressed the hope that Your Lordship would lose no time in consulting with the Governments of St. Petersburg and Vienna with a view of allaying the storm which threatens. I said that I would lose no time in conveying His Majesty's wishes to Your Lordship.

On an important review of all the circumstances connected with this affair, I cannot but express the opinion that the Emperor is not unreasonable in his present demands. However unfounded may have been his first pretensions to the possession of Luxemburg, it cannot, I think, fairly be doubted that these pretensions did not meet with discouragement from the statesman who was supposed to be all powerful at Berlin, and that hopes were held out to His Majesty that his object might be attained. Hence His Majesty has been induced to pursue that object, too hastily and incautiously

perhaps, but still under the conviction that success was within his reach.

It would be presumptuous in me to express any opinion of what is or is not possible in Germany, but surely a calm and solemn representation at Berlin of facts as they exist, and a declaration of the Neutral Powers that in their judgment the honour of both parties will be safe under one or other of the arrangements which have been proposed has become a duty, even if the appeal is to be unsuccessful. It is perhaps the last chance for the preservation of peace.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

28th May, 1867.

The Prussian visit is going off very well. Both the Prince and Princess have expressed to me their satisfaction at the reception given them by the Emperor. Goltz has been in agonies to obtain a remission of the fiat which deferred the visit of the King until after that of the Czar, and I understand that he has been so far successful that the King of Prussia is now permitted to come on the 5th and so to pass four days in the company of his nephew.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

29th May.

The King of Prussia has announced his intention of bringing Bismarck with him and the Emperor is very angry. The move is not a prudent one, but I suppose that as Gortschakoff comes, the King of Prussia thinks it right to be similarly accompanied.

Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley

14th June, 1867.

During the last visit of the King of Prussia to this capital, explanations have taken place which, it may be hoped, will put the relations between the French and Prussian Governments upon a more secure footing than they have lately appeared to be. On the one hand, the King of Prussia and his Minister, M. de Bismarck, had come to Paris and distrustful of the future intentions of the Emperor. On the other, His Imperial Majesty had imbibed the notion that the ambition of Prussia was not satisfied, and that she aimed



THE SOVEREIGNS OF FRANCE, RUSSIA, AND PRUSSIA, 1867

From a sketch by Carpeaux at Malmaison.

at greater advantages in Germany than had been secured to her by the Treaty of Prague.

Prince Gortschakoff appears to have acted in the first instance as the intermedium of communication between the two parties. Subsequently, the King had conversations both with the Emperor and with M. de Moustier, and finally the Emperor received M. de Bismarck, when the whole question of the future position of Northern Germany was discussed and explanations and assurances were exchanged which seem to have removed the impressions to which I have alluded above.

The French Government are prepared to acquiesce in all the arrangements made by the Treaty of Prague. On the other hand, they expect that Southern Germany shall be allowed to reconstruct herself as the states may think best for their own interests—that the Southern fortresses shall not be occupied by Northern troops, and that Austria shall not be further molested. Upon these points M. de Bismarck has given the formal assurance that there is no desire on the part of Prussia to extend her territory south of the Maine ; nor to enter into more intimate political relations with the Southern States ; no intention of occupying any of the Southern fortresses—no design inimical to the interests of Austria. The difficulty, M. de Bismarck explained, with which Prussia has to contend, is the wish of the Southern Populations to join the Northern Confederation. He is opposed to the realization of that wish, and will do all in his power to prevent its consummation. The interests of Southern Germany do not coincide with those of the North : the character of the population is different ; the religion of the majority is of the Roman Church. No advantage therefore can arise to Prussia from a nearer amalgamation with the Southern States, while the task of governing them would be most irksome and difficult. Such being his opinion, M. de Bismarck added, it was not likely that he should precipitate matters, at the risk of a war with France, a war in which he freely admitted Prussia could obtain no permanent advantage, even if successful, and success in which would but render the future still more precarious. He would therefore abjure

all wish on the part of Prussia to alter the present state of things, and he would promise to do all in his power to control the action of those who might differ from him in opinion, and to avoid giving any offence to the susceptibilities of the French nation. At the same time he must not be misunderstood. He might have a very difficult game to play. He was a constitutional minister, and must take account of public opinion. He could not prevent liberty of speech, or freedom of writing—nay—he might be obliged himself to say and to do things unpalatable to French feeling. If incidents of this nature were to be seized upon and made subjects of complaint, serious consequences might follow. There must be forbearance on both sides. It would be his study to exercise it towards France, but there must be reciprocity if there was to be friendship.

The Emperor appears to have expressed himself in terms of gratification at these assurances ; and to have admitted that he could not fairly require more. He put questions to M. de Bismarck upon various points of detail but I have not been made acquainted with more than the general nature of the conversation. I have only to add that M. de Bismarck has left Paris satisfied that unless some unforeseen incident should arise there is no danger of any serious disagreement between the French and the Prussian Governments.

* *Prince Metternich to Baron Beust*

Paris, 2nd July, 1867.

The Emperor Napoleon to His Majesty the Emperor.

" We are plunged into grief by the terrible news which has just reached us. I lament, while I admire, the energy and courage shown by the Emperor Maximilian in trying to fight single-handed against a cabal which has only defeated him by treachery. And I shall never forgive myself for having, though with the best intentions, helped to bring about such a calamity.

" I desire to express to Your Majesty my most sincere and profound regrets."

NAPOLEON.

* *Baron Vitzthum to Baron Beust*

Paris, 19th January, 1868.

The Emperor received us quite informally at half-past two yesterday in his study in the Tuilleries.

The exceptional position which Prince Metternich occupies at the French Court, the kindly way he has of taking me by the shoulder, and the sympathies which Napoleon professes to feel for a regenerated Austria, all gave me reason to expect a gracious welcome. Nevertheless, the fact that the Sovereign, who was formerly so much inclined to keep his own counsel, had thought fit to tell his Minister about such a very confidential step, and the somewhat discouraging tone in which M. de Moustier had told us the previous evening that His Majesty did not think he could adopt our plan, had given me cause to reflect, and I was in no way prepared for this intimate conversation, in which we all three took part with complete freedom and great animation.

I had not seen the Emperor for nearly ten years. I had been told that he was in a bad state of health. I had been told that he was indifferent and in fact in a state of complete ennui. I was, therefore, agreeably surprised to see his eyes, usually so dull, sparkle with animation, while he greeted with a most kindly smile our replies to his innumerable questions regarding the growing prosperity in Austria. Nothing seemed to please him better than the picture we drew of the curious contrast between the commercial and industrial prosperity of the vanquished at Sadowa while the provinces of the victors languished in stagnation.

I do not pretend to be able to read between the lines of such an enigmatic physiognomy. But, being in good form the Emperor Napoleon gave me the impression of a man aroused from a distressing nightmare. His mind generates the light and life returns to him with the dawn. This time it is not he who will make war without being prepared for it.

France and Prussia have changed places. Yesterday it was France, to-day it is Prussia who wants to put off the evil day.

What is the meaning of this sudden change in M. de

Bismarck's policy? Whom does he deceive here? Why should Prussia, who has always been supposed to be in the pocket of Russia, suddenly seem so anxious to make friends with France and Austria?

What if this isolation of Russia should be, as M. de Moustier seems to think, a triumph of Western diplomacy?

But I do not feel altogether sure that this move on the part of Berlin has not been concerted with St. Petersburg in order to disarm France and England.

The Emperor is in doubt, and the inscrutable smile with which he admits that the key has still to be found shows that he does not share the optimism of his Minister.

Nevertheless, this new attitude of Count Bismarck squares quite well with the ideas of the Emperor Napoleon.

My brief admission that our views were already out of date, was well received: "When I left Vienna, War seemed imminent: but when I arrived in Paris, I find all the world at peace."

"Well, you see," said the Emperor, "since the telegraph, change of scene can be effected quickly."

Napoleon III seemed purposely to exaggerate the importance of the despatches he had just received from Constantinople. According to M. de Bourré, Turkey was threatened with an early collapse if the Powers did not immediately settle the question of Crete.

Having read us a report from another agent who painted the ineptitude of the Turkish authorities in lively colours, His Majesty exclaimed, "Now you see, the Porte is exhausting her resources of men and money. These Orientals are not financiers. Our protégés give us a lot of trouble. You the Turks, and me the Italians!"

It is in this imminent danger, in the impotence of the Sultan to save himself, that the Emperor of the French can detect the starting point for common action between all the Powers and not only signatories of the Treaty of 15th April, 1856.

"Let us invite them all to consult with us," said the Emperor, "the replies that we may receive will give us the measure of the sincerity of those who wish to help us to save Turkey."

If he does not want a three-cornered Conference, is it perhaps because he has not a clear conscience in regard to England and that he is not quite sure how far he can count on the confidence of this old ally? All the same the Emperor Napoleon seems to be at one with us on the urgent need of sounding London. Not only does the Emperor approve the idea, but is quite ready to associate himself with these informal enquiries.

He asked me to let him have my impressions through Prince Metternich and also expressed a wish to see me on my return from London.

Prince Metternich will send you the official report of this audience. I only send you my personal impressions.

* *Prince Metternich to Baron Beust*

Paris, 30th May, 1868.

Confidential.

The Emperor expressed himself as being very well pleased with the situation. He attributes the peaceful turn of events to the prudent attitude adopted by France and Austria in concert. The good effects are increasingly apparent and he does full justice to the wisdom of your policy. If he sometimes shows a little nervousness of Hungarian Prussophil influence which will not admit of any interference in Germany by us, he thinks and hopes that you will not allow yourself to be held back by such selfish considerations.

The Emperor always seems very curious to know if we have much trouble with Prussian intrigues in Hungary and Bohemia, and thinks that probably the Imperial Authorities discover them as soon as they are hatched.

He is sincerely pleased with what I have told him of the situation in Austria and especially in regard to your daily increasing influence.

His Majesty described the advantages of your independent position better than I could have done, which shows him to be very well informed.

Speaking of the travels of Prince Napoleon, the Emperor said: "I am quite pleased to let him go, he brings back interesting impressions, sometimes quite inaccurate, and

sometimes salutary, and at least he does not annoy me while he is away."

The Prince Napoleon had no mission and travels on his own account. The Emperor expressed his regret that he could make no use of this man's quite unusual intelligence which might be of great service on occasions.

We talked a great deal about rifles and guns and fortresses, but I am perfectly convinced that the Emperor means to keep the peace as long as he possibly can for he is well aware of the advantage of so doing both in giving us more time to get on our feet again and also in disarming the suspicions of the Germans against himself.

Nevertheless, I cannot conceal from you that during the last few days there has been a renewal of tension between France and Prussia. The official newspapers are again abusing each other and Count Goltz seems to be rather less confident.

However, that is only a newspaper affair and it was Berlin who began this press war.

I notice that at these moments the Hanoverian party bestirs itself and gets some small official encouragement from the Government. It is M. Drouyn de Lhuys who for some time past has been looking after the interests of the Medings and their consorts and acts as their intermediary with the Emperor.

M. Rouher is more than ever to the fore—and, if I am not mistaken, he has made some concessions to the war party which have pleased the Empress and the Minister for War. However, I think he uses his influence to calm things down and is entirely in accord with the Emperor who will not allow France to be humiliated any more without having a fight for it, a decisive fight for which she is well prepared, but the sword will not be drawn until the last moment when it is no longer possible to draw back without loss of honour.

* *Prince Metternich to Baron Beust*

Paris, 3rd July, 1868.

Confidential and Secret.

I have never found the Emperor better, both in health and spirits, or more forthcoming, than he was during the short visit I have just paid him.

It was the same with the Empress, also, and for the first time since the winter she treated me with the confidence to which I have been accustomed. Consequently, I have several important and interesting things to tell you, and I shall have more to say about them at the next opportunity.

The Emperor spoke to me at length of the general situation and said that he regretted that in the present precarious state of affairs it had not been possible to reach an agreement with a definite object in view. According to him, if France and Austria could come to an understanding they could, between them, maintain the peace of the world.

I replied that we could wish for nothing better than to unite with France in a common effort to keep the peace. That our goodwill in this respect could not be called in question. Besides, it was quite evident that our common efforts, the aims of which had been so clearly defined at Strasburg, had already produced tangible results.

The Emperor did not deny this and even congratulated himself on the results obtained. He is perturbed only about two things, which if not resolutely dealt with might wreck the future of our understanding. His first preoccupation, which is of long standing, concerns the question of Hungary. He confesses to an uneasiness lest, with the best and most logical intentions in the world, the Hungarians aim too high and may succeed in obtaining more than their fair share. (You will remember that for the last six months the Emperor has always held this same language to me about Hungary.)

The second point is that the Emperor of Austria can, like himself, assemble all his forces with the firm intention of, sooner or later, re-establishing himself in Germany! (Terms of his speech before the war of 1866.)

According to His Majesty, if France and Austria uniting all their forces, moral and material, for a definite object (such as the re-establishment of the supremacy of Austria in Germany, as for instance at the head of a confederation of the Southern States—an object which the Emperor declares would equally suit his purpose), they could, without going to war and solely by the weight of their common will, gain their objective, which would ensure the peace of the world for many long years to come.

The Emperor, having developed this thesis with great vigour and having got it off his chest, then seemed to want to tone down a little the immensity of its scope, added that we should above all things consolidate our position, collect our forces and replace in the hands of our Sovereign that power without which it would hardly be possible to accomplish great things. He approved our desire to be conciliatory, pacific, and neutral, but I could see that there was a spark under the ashes and it was quite evident that his real aim was wrapped up in the guise of a narrow and rigid thesis.

I could not help reminding him that the understanding which he was now pressing upon me so frankly was one which he would hardly allow me to mention in 1866 of unhappy memory, that he had not been able to arouse half, nay a quarter, of this enthusiasm which he recommends to-day.

The Emperor replied, "Oh, that is quite true, but I wasn't ready then, and I am now!" He then cut short the conversation by taking me to see a gas pump which is a new invention. As he called up an *aide de camp* to accompany us, he did not say any more about our affairs, but he did allude to the King of Prussia and his desire to digest his conquests at leisure, and to M. de Bismarck's illness, and the Turkish Railway.

I should add that the Emperor expressed the wish to see me again shortly, so as to continue the conversation.

To sum up : I can see that he would first like to be sure that the Emperor, our august Sovereign, has not given up Germany, before embarking on a more precise policy. There lies the true meaning of the situation.

* Prince Metternich to Baron Beust

Paris, 20th September, 1869.

Private.

To begin with I must tell you that the Emperor has grown very thin—that he is still very pale and very weak—like a man who has been in bed for weeks.

I must confess that the first sight of him gave me a shock and I can now quite understand why he has not wished to

see anyone except his most intimate friends. After the first moment, however, I found him in better form than his looks had led me to expect. All the same he is still tired, and after twenty minutes of concentration I could see that he had had enough. His language, however, was very clear, definite, and precise. After having asked me to thank our august Master for his kind letter, the Emperor went straight to the root of the matter. I read him your despatch of the 9th June and your letter to Vitzthum of the 26th August. He took exception (as I was sure he would, and had said so to Vitzthum) to the passages relating to Vimercati's assertions. He had never thought that our august Master either could or should play up to Italy's game—which after all is quite natural—in the matter of the evacuation. The truth is that the Emperor said to Vimercati that he would leave Rome as soon as possible, but he never promised him that he would leave the Eternal City before the Council met, although he had *thought* that that might perhaps be done, but it would depend on the circumstances and above all on the guarantees which Italy might offer him. But that is just the amusing part, for it is hardly possible for confidence to be more misplaced than that of the Emperor in Victor Emmanuel. His Majesty disapproves of all this because it tends to force his hand, and he does not seem to like the policy of his present Government because he thinks it deprives him of the initiative which he wishes to make use of as and when he thinks fit.

This is what he has done. He has written to the King through Vimercati to ask him to accept our treaty in principle and in writing. The Italians have made difficulties, in order to extort the promise of evacuation. Then the Emperor asked for his letter to be returned to him, but the King said he would give the required answer rather than appear to be trying to back out, or to break his word. The Emperor is now awaiting this answer which he thinks will be just as good as the draft I showed him. Then there will only remain to exchange notes between us and the French and between our august Sovereign and King Victor Emmanuel.

The Emperor has another grievance, namely, the indiscretions of the Italians, in particular of the King. He has reason

to believe that it is the leakage at Florence which has brought Lord Clarendon over here to ask him point-blank about the Tripartite agreement.

The Emperor replied that there was nothing bellicose in it, that it was very natural in the circumstances, and that it contained no secret clauses. Lord Clarendon, however, read him a lecture on the subject and said that it would take very little more than an agreement of this sort to throw Russia into the arms of Prussia. The Emperor cut him short, but feels sure that Lord Clarendon put in his oar on behalf of Prussia because of the stories that got about in Italy.

I asked the Emperor if he wished me to wait for the reply from Victor Emmanuel. His Majesty replied that it would be useless to do that because the King would first change his mind two or three times before coming to a decision but that he would come round in the end ; and that then they could proceed to the exchange of notes, to which he had no objection, quite the contrary.

His Majesty asked me where exactly I was going and said that he would find means of letting me know when I ought to come back, if there should be anything to do other than to proceed with the exchange of notes. If not, then that could be done direct through La Tour d'Auvergne, who would write to you on the subject. I then took leave of His Majesty and went to see the Empress who was choosing snuff-boxes to give as presents during her tour. She was pleased with the letter from our Empress. It did not contain what I had expected regarding the Empress's passage through our country. Anyway, this question does not arise as the Empress is going through Switzerland.

Her Majesty talked to me at some length about the Emperor's illness, and about the political situation. She declares that the Emperor was never in any danger, that he has only had haemorrhoids, complicated by rheumatism.

She said that he was convalescing with surprising rapidity considering the weakness caused by being so long in bed. The effect produced by the exaggerated reports circulated about his illness were, according to the Empress, a lesson in what rumour can do. The Emperor had himself prepared

everything to establish a Council of Regency to proclaim his wishes in case of any accident .He had resolved to give a fair trial to a constitutional *régime*, without altogether relinquishing the reins of Government. He was thus preparing for the succession of his son, but the reports that he intended shortly to abdicate were entirely without foundation.

The Prince Napoleon has lowered himself very much in the opinion of the public by his indecent eagerness in regard to the Regency question. The Empress believes that Prince Napoleon had made up his mind that the Emperor was going to die.

Her Majesty starts on the 2nd or 3rd of October, she hopes that the Emperor will soon be able to go to Compiègne and there resume his ordinary life.

To sum up ; the result of all this is :—

(1) That the Emperor is well on the way to complete recovery.

(2) That his *moral* is not in any way affected.

(3) That he would like to get Victor Emmanuel to sign without a previous promise of evacuation.

(4) That he does not trust the Italians in regard to leakage.

He is going to write to our august Sovereign and I think he will repeat his assurances to me that he will regard the treaty as signed.

* *The Emperor Napoleon III to the Emperor Francis Joseph
St. Cloud, 24th September, 1869.*

Monsieur mon Frère,

Prince Metternich has handed me the letter which Your Majesty has been good enough to write me and I hasten to tell you how touched I am by the friendly feelings which you express towards me.

I fully reciprocate Your Majesty's sentiments and hope to have the opportunity to prove my sincerity. Like Your Majesty, I also rejoice at the excellent relations existing between our Governments. This community of aims and interests cannot fail to further the cause of European peace.

If, however, though it seems almost impossible, your Empire should be menaced by any unforeseen aggression

I should not hesitate to place all the forces of France at your disposal. You may rest assured that I shall not open negotiations with any foreign Power without previous consultation with you.

But, as regards the question of putting on paper the understanding between ourselves and the King of Italy, I must confess to Your Majesty that I see therein a certain danger as it would be impossible to guard against leakage.

Already the mere rumour of this agreement has drawn together England, Prussia, and Russia. Nevertheless, if Your Majesty insists, I am prepared to state in writing my wishes and my intentions.

* *Prince Metternich to Baron Beust*

Paris, 7th January, 1870.

On Friday, the 4th January, I spent the day with the Emperor at Marly. His Majesty asked me what I thought of the new Cabinet.

I said that I considered he had acted wisely and rightly in choosing men whose convictions and antecedents constituted in the public mind a guarantee of the sincerity and loyalty with which the Emperor would inaugurate the new régime.

The Emperor replied that once he had decided on the change it was far better to surround himself immediately with tried men of well-known principles, rather than with men of straw. He added that he had been very lucky in getting these gentlemen to take office *subject to the conditions which he had seen fit to impose upon them.*

" You understand," continued the Emperor, " that there are limits, both in foreign and domestic policy which I will not overstep ! "

Without explaining to me in detail his conditions the Emperor gave me to understand that in Foreign Affairs he would have no " peace at any price " policy : and that as regards internal affairs the legislative body was to remain in *status quo*, that is to say, the new Ministers had to promise not to dissolve the Chamber.

I said that on this last point I could not wholly agree with him. All depended, in my opinion, on the attitude of the old Right : and a dissolution at the right moment might serve to strengthen the Empire. In any case, I considered it the most difficult question—and also the one respecting which there was the most difference of opinion. In certain circumstances I thought it would be very difficult for Ministers to defend some of the recent official appointments.

I begged the Emperor to pardon me for raising a question which must be to him a black spot on the horizon, but I felt bound to warn him of the gravity it might assume in the future.

The Emperor then entered into a detailed discussion on this subject with the result that I had reluctantly to agree that it might be possible to maintain the *status quo* of the Chamber, though I got him to admit that in certain circumstances a dissolution might prove the wiser policy.

The Emperor then spoke warmly of Count Daru, and told me what I was able to verify for myself the following day, that the new Minister was much more correct and patriotic than one would have dared to hope.

The Emperor said to me in conclusion : " You may be sure of one thing ; if I have to yield to the exigencies of the moment that does not mean that I shall throw up the sponge. You need not fear that I shall abdicate. Time will show you that."

I said that both his friends and his enemies were well aware of this, which while it gave him strength on the one hand would raise difficulties for him on the other.

" I know," replied the Emperor, " but after all, what can I do ? "

VII

FALL AND EXILE

THE documents which deal with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War have almost all been published, but never together. Here the object is to show if not the actual thoughts of the Emperor, the considerations which weighed with his principal advisers, as far as can be judged by a neutral. These extracts should be read in connection with those published in *Origins of the Franco-Prussian War*, by Professor R. H. Lord. The despatches of Lord Lyons¹ and Prince Richard Metternich constitute an independent narrative which is the best means of testing the impassioned apologiae of Ollivier and Gramont, and are an interesting adjunct to the brutal avowals of Bismarck. The record is resumed by the Emperor after his fall.

Though his heart is torn by his sympathy with the sufferings of his country, he had not lost his foresight or the shrewdness of his judgment.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville

5th July, 1870.

The Duc de Gramont told me this afternoon that the French Government had received positive intelligence that the Crown of Spain had been offered by General Prim to the Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, and had been accepted by the Prince.

To this (continued M. de Gramont) France will not resign herself, and when I say that we shall not resign ourselves to it, I mean that we shall not permit it, that we shall use our whole strength to prevent it.

¹ Lord Lyons had succeeded Lord Cowley as British Ambassador in Paris.

M. de Gramont then informed me that he had declared categorically to Baron de Werther, the Prussian Ambassador, that France would not tolerate the establishment of the Prince de Hohenzollern, or any other Prussian Prince on the throne of Spain.

Baron de Werther had (M. de Gramont said) answered that he was on the point of setting out for Ems to pay his duty to his Sovereign, and that he would not fail to inform His Majesty of the sentiments of the French Government.

M. de Gramont proceeded to observe to me that nothing could be further from the wishes of the French Government than to interfere in the internal affairs of Spain, but that the interests and the dignity of France alike forbade them to permit the establishment of a Prussian dynasty in the peninsula. They could not consent to the existence of a state of things which would oblige them in case of a war with Prussia to keep a watch upon Spain which would paralyse a division of their army. The proposal to set the crown of Spain upon a Prussian head was nothing less than an insult to France. With a full consideration of all that such a declaration implied, the Government of the Emperor declared that France could not endorse it.

The conduct of General Prim had, M. de Gramont said, been insincere and indeed treacherous. He had put the Emperor's Ambassador at Madrid off the scent, speaking to him of other candidates, and had not given him the least hint of what he was about. Finally M. de Gramont begged me to lose no time in making Your Lordship acquainted with the sentiments of the Emperor's Government, and expressed his earnest hope that Her Majesty's Government would co-operate with him in endeavouring to ward off an event which would, he said, be fraught with danger to the peace of Europe.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville

7th July.

[Lyons went on the evening of 5th July to Ollivier's reception, and had a long talk with him.]

"His language," wrote Lyons, "was in substance the same as that held by M. de Gramont, but he entered into rather

more detail, and spoke with still more precision of the impossibility of permitting the Prince to become King of Spain. Public opinion in France (he said) would never tolerate it. Any cabinet, any Government which acquiesced in it, would be at once overthrown. For his own part, it was well known, he had never been an enemy to the aspirations of Germany for unity, but with all his goodwill towards the Germans, he must confess that he felt this proceeding to be an insult, and fully shared the indignation of the public. . . .

"The declaration which Ollivier made," wrote Lyons, "did not go at all beyond the feelings of the country.

"I do not, however, believe," he continued, "that either the Emperor or his Ministers either wish for war or expect it. At the moment, they confidently hope that they shall succeed without war in preventing the Prince from wearing the Crown of Spain. They conceive that if this should be so, they shall gain popularity at home by giving effect energetically to the feeling of the nation, and that they shall raise their credit abroad as well as at home by a diplomatic success. They are, moreover, not sorry to have an opportunity of testing the public opinion with regard to Prussia. Lastly, they are convinced that it would have been impossible to put up with what, rightly or wrongly, the nation would regard as a first triumph of Prussia over France.

In pursuing this policy, however, they have run the risk of enlisting the pride of Germany, as well as of Spain, in the cause of the Prince of Hohenzollern, and have left themselves no means of retreat. If they do not succeed in preventing the success of the Prince by powerful means, they have avowedly no alternative but to go to war.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville

7th July.

I observed to the Duc de Gramont this afternoon that I could not but feel uneasy respecting the declaration which he had made the day before to the *Corps Legislatif*. I could not, I said, help thinking that milder language would have

rendered it more easy to treat both with Prussia and with Spain for the withdrawal of the pretensions of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern.

M. de Gramont answered that he was glad I had mentioned this as he wished to have an opportunity of conveying to Your Lordship an explanation of his reasons for making a public declaration in terms so positive. Your Lordship would, he was sure, as Minister in a constitutional country, understand perfectly the impossibility of contending with public opinion. The nation was, he said, so strongly roused upon the question that it could not be resisted or trifled with. He had seen me in the Chamber when he made his declaration. I had, therefore, myself witnessed the extraordinary enthusiasm and unanimity with which the announcement of the determination of the Government to repel the insult offered to the nation had been received. He had kept within bounds, or he might have provoked a still more remarkable explosion of feeling. Now the indignation out of doors was equally violent and equally general. Nothing less than what he had said would have satisfied the public. His speech was, in fact, as regarded the interior of France, absolutely necessary, and diplomatic considerations must yield to public safety at home.

Nor could he admit that it was simply the pride of France that was in question. Her military power was at stake. What had been the result of placing the brother of Prince Leopold at the head of the Government of Roumania? This petty ruler had immediately begun to collect arms, to form an army and, obeying in all points the instructions he received from Berlin, to prepare a Prussian arsenal to be used in case of war between Prussia and Austria. What had been done on a small scale in Roumania would be done on a great scale in Spain. The Prince of Hohenzollern would make himself a military Sovereign, and would get ready the means of paralysing two hundred thousand French troops, if France should be engaged in war in Europe. It would be madness to wait till this was accomplished: if there was to be war, it had better come at once.

The Duc de Gramont added that his language in the

Chamber had been more moderate than that which he felt bound to use in speaking in his own Cabinet. In fact, he said, I am obliged to say to you without reserve that the accession of the Prince of Hohenzollern to the throne of Spain is *War*. "*Son avènement c'est la guerre.*"

How then, M. de Gramont asked, could so great a calamity be avoided. He would confess that he trusted much to the aid of Her Majesty's Government. By exercising their influence at Berlin and at Madrid, they might now manifest their friendship for France, and preserve the peace of Europe.

As regarded the Prussians, the essential thing was to make them understand that France could not be put off with an evasive answer. The protests which had been alleged to Austria in the case of Prince Charles would not avail. It would be childish to affirm that the Prussian Government were entirely strangers to the whole affair—that the Prince of Hohenzollern was of age and master of his own actions, that Prussia could not prevent his setting off for Spain with his cap in his hand, as his brother had secretly started for Roumania. It was not to be credited that the King of Prussia had not the power to forbid a Prince of his family, and an officer of his army, to accept a foreign throne. It would be of the utmost benefit if these considerations could be pressed upon the Prussian Cabinet by Her Majesty's Government. . . .

It was, however, in Spain that the assistance of Her Majesty's Government might be most effectually given to France. With Marshal Prim there was nothing to be done—he had bound himself hand and foot. This was not, however, the case with the Regent Serrano. The Regent might surely be convinced that it was his duty to separate himself from a policy which would plunge Spain into civil war, and put an end to peace in Europe.

Lord Granville to Lord Lyons

7th July, 1870.

Confidential.

There were two things which the Duc de Gramont mentioned to me in the course of the conversation recorded

in my immediately preceding despatch, which I think it better to report to Your Lordship in a confidential form.

First, then, His Excellency told me that M. Olozaga, the Spanish Ambassador here, intended to send off a secretary this evening to urge the Regent, in his name, to break with Prim and prevent the assembling of the Cortes.

Secondly, M. de Gramont said that it was quite useless to attempt to shake Marshal Prim. The Marshal was willing to have adopted the Duc de Montpensier as candidate, but His Royal Highness had declined to give the sum required, and thus had not come to terms with the Marshal who had found Count Bismarck more liberal.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville

7th July, 1870.

I asked M. de Solms¹ what power the King of Prussia, as chief of the house of Hohenzollern, or as Sovereign, could exercise over the Prince in the present case. He said he hardly knew; that certainly Prince Leopold, being in the Army, could not lawfully leave it without the King's permission, but that Prince Charles, who had undoubtedly been guilty of desertion when he went off to Roumania, had been pardoned.

I observed to M. de Solms that much as we might deplore it, we could not shut our eyes to the fact that the feelings of the French nation would now render it impossible for the Government, even if they wished it, to acquiesce in the elevation of Prince Leopold to the Spanish throne. Neither Prussia nor any other nation that I knew of had any real interest in making the Prince King of Spain—but all nations were deeply interested in preventing war, and that nation would most deserve the gratitude of Europe which should put an end to this cause of disquiet and danger. It seemed to me that the King of Prussia might more than any other Sovereign have the means of putting a stop to the whole thing in a dignified and honourable manner.

¹ The Prussian Chargé d'Affairs.

Lord Lyons to Lord Granville

Paris, 8th July, 1870.

Gramont—after thanking Lyons for Granville's courtesies to La Valette—went on to say that he was still without any answer from Prussia, and that this silence rendered it impossible for the French Government to abstain any longer from making military preparations. Some steps in this direction had been already taken, and to-morrow the military authorities must begin in earnest. The movement of troops would be settled at the council to be held at St. Cloud in the morning.

On my manifesting some surprise and regret at the rapid pace at which the French Government seemed to be proceeding, M. de Gramont insisted that it was impossible for him to delay any longer. They had reason to know (indeed the Spanish Minister did not deny it) that the King of Prussia had been cognizant of the negotiation between Marshal Prim and the Prince of Hohenzollern throughout. It was, therefore, incumbent upon His Majesty, if he desired to show friendship to France, to prohibit formally the acceptance of the Crown by a Prince of his House. Silence, or an evasive answer would be equivalent to a refusal. It could not be said that the quarrel was of France's seeking. On the contrary, from the battle of Sadowa up to this incident, France had shown a patience, a moderation, and a conciliatory spirit which had in the opinion of a vast number of Frenchmen been carried much too far. Now when all was tranquil and the irritation caused by the aggrandizement of Prussia was gradually subsiding, the Prussians, in defiance of the feelings and of the interests of France, endeavoured to establish one of their Princes on the Pyrenees. This aggression it was impossible for France to put up with. It was earnestly to be hoped that the King would efface the impression it had made by openly forbidding the Prince to go to Spain.

A voluntary renunciation on the part of the Prince would, M. de Gramont thought, be a most fortunate solution of a difficult and intricate question: and he begged Her Majesty's Government to use all their influence to bring it about.'

* *Prince Metternich to Baron Beust*

Paris, 8th July, 1870.

Last Wednesday (6th July) I found the Emperor much taken up with the Hohenzollern affair. He appeared delighted, I might even say joyous, and greeted me with the phrase : " Well, what do you think of our affair ? "

I said I thought it was serious enough to judge by the decided manner in which the Duke de Gramont spoke to me about it. I added that I found it impossible to believe that Prussia would not give way in a matter in which she was not directly interested.

In my opinion M. de Bismarck would be only too glad to meet France in this matter in order to be able to ask for reciprocal treatment in matters more directly concerning Prussia.

To this the Emperor demurred, saying : " Do you really believe that Berlin can give way at once after the very strong representations which we have made to them and which at this moment the Duke de Gramont is reinforcing still more vigorously in his speech to the Chamber."

" I could believe it, Sire," I replied, " for even if they could not decide to give in immediately, the pressure brought to bear upon them by England and Russia would surely break down a resistance which would clearly place Prussia in a difficult position, in fact obviously in the wrong."

The Emperor told me that in any case the French must be ready, because everything would depend on the rapidity of military preparations. His Majesty did not believe that the Prussians could mobilize without its being known that they were doing so. " We must have our eyes open," he added, " for I believe the winner will be the one who can be ready first."

" Do you think," continued the Emperor, " that we can count on Austria ? "

I replied that it was very difficult for me to answer that question point-blank—that it would, to a great extent, depend on the attitude of Russia—and also on the time allowed us for preparations. As to this, I begged the Emperor

to warn us at the earliest possible moment of any acts of hostility.

"Assuredly," replied the Emperor, "and you may be sure that I shall not ask of you more than I know to be within your power."

The Emperor then told me how this matter had arisen. He said it appeared that there had been a secret correspondence direct between Marshal Prim and Count Bismarck.

As to the attitude of Russia, the Emperor told me that he had just read a very interesting letter from M. de Varnbuler, giving an account of his interview with the Emperor Alexander. The Czar had told him that as long as he lived he would not permit Prussia to annex the Southern German States, but, he added, "don't start being democratic in your country. It is the ruin of Governments. If Prussia attacks you with a view to conquest, I shall be there to defend you. But if, on the contrary, Prussia were forced to intervene in order to put down a revolutionary outbreak, then I could do nothing for you."

I remarked that this speech of the Emperor Alexander was just the sort of thing you would have expected from his father the Emperor Nicholas.

I must say that all this Spanish-Prussian affair seems to me to have been seized upon as an opportunity to score a diplomatic success and to humiliate Prussia, and that the French thought they could bring it off without endangering the peace. But I must add, however, that if Prussia's resistance should end in war, France would be in a better position than if the trouble had arisen out of a purely German question. I gather that this view is pretty generally held here in Paris.

* Lord Lyons to Lord Granville

[The English were still puzzled as to the amount of excitement in France and trusted that the French would act with moderation and forbearance. The English were doing all they could for peace, but the precipitations of the French were not helping them.]

M. de Gramont said that in this matter, the French

10th July, 1870.

Government were following, not leading, the nation. Public opinion would not admit of their doing less than they had done. As regarded military preparations, common prudence required that they should not be behindhand. In the midst of a profound calm, when the French Cabinet and Chamber were employed in reducing their military budget, Prussia exploded upon them the mine which she had prepared in secret. It was necessary that France should be at least as forward as Prussia in military preparations.

M. de Gramont went on to say that he would tell me exactly how the question now stood. The King of Prussia had told M. Benedetti last evening that he had in fact consented to the Prince of Hohenzollern's accepting the Crown of Spain, and that having given his consent, it would be difficult for him now to withdraw it. His Majesty had added, however, that he would confer with the Prince, and would give a definitive answer to France when he had done so.

Thus, M. de Gramont observed, two things are clear. First that the King of Prussia was a consenting party to the acceptance of the Crown by the Prince, and secondly that the Prince's decision to persist in his acceptance, or to retire, will be made in concert with His Majesty. Thus then, said M. de Gramont, the affair is now beyond all controversy one between France and the King.

Finally, M. de Gramont told me that I might report to Your Lordship that if the Prince of Hohenzollern should now, on the advice of the King of Prussia, withdraw his acceptance of the Crown, the whole affair would be at an end.

* *Baron Vitzthum to Count Andrassy*

Brussels, 16th January, 1873.

On the 11th July, 1870, I received a telegram instructing me to go at once to Paris, find out everything, and return immediately to Vienna.

I started the next day and on reaching Paris Prince Metternich, who had been told that I was coming, gave me all the information available and showed me the last telegrams from Vienna.

Paris, at that moment, can only be described as in a state of feverish delirium.

The speech made by the Duke de Gramont in the Chamber stirred up the whole country into a war-fever which the feeble Government of M. Ollivier could no longer control.

As I had been instructed to "get all the information I could", I felt obliged to see the Emperor Napoleon and his Foreign Minister, although I had no communication, either official or confidential, to make to them.

Prince Metternich requested an audience for me and the Emperor received me at St. Cloud on the 15th July, 1870, at 10 a.m.

Having read the letter of introduction which our Ambassador had given me, His Majesty said: "I can understand that all this has taken you by surprise?"

"Yes, Sir, completely," I replied. "I see by the telegrams that my Government has had a most unpleasant surprise, and that they have done everything they could to dissuade your Ministers from a war which appears to be imminent notwithstanding the renunciation of the Hohenzollern Prince which, in the opinion of M. de Beust, should have settled the whole matter."

"We have gone too far to draw back now," observed Napoleon III. "M. de Beust is possibly right, but Providence has intervened; it is the fault of one of my Ministers who is endowed with good qualities but lacks experience of State Affairs, M. Ollivier. All we ask of you is that, without abandoning your neutrality, you should send an army corps to watch the frontier of Bohemia to prevent the whole weight of the German army from being thrown on our backs at once."

"As I have only just come from Brussels and have not been in Vienna for some time, I am unable to tell Your Majesty whether we can do that. In any case it would be very difficult. A lightning conductor in the wrong place may draw the lightning rather than avert it. Your Majesty knows that our conversations of last year came to nothing, that nothing was signed and that we always said that in case of a war between France and Prussia that we should remain neutral and finally that we have entered into no other commitment unless it be not to come to any agreement with a third party without your knowledge. Your Majesty knows that our

army is in process of reorganization and that we cannot put it on a war footing at twenty-four hours' notice. I could only report Your Majesty's wishes to my august Master, but I think the best service my country could render you would be an offer of our good offices, our mediation, if that would suit Your Majesty. I have learnt that Your Majesty yourself suggested at the Council yesterday the idea of a Congress. Perhaps we might propose this."

The Emperor Napoleon appeared to like this idea and even authorized me to propose it to our august Master.

"But," he added, "it mustn't prevent us fighting."

I gave an account of this interview to our Ambassador, who at once telegraphed the substance of it to Vienna.

After several fruitless attempts, we succeeded, Prince Metternich and I, in getting the Duke de Gramont to receive us at 7 o'clock in the evening, an hour before my departure.

I tried to sound the Foreign Minister on the subject of a Congress which the Emperor of the French wished to leave to our initiative but the mere mention of the word Congress so infuriated him that it was quite impossible to pursue the subject any further, so I confined myself to calming him by a few polite remarks and withdrew.

"I am not sorry," said Prince Metternich to me, "that you should have seen him in that state of mind, for at least you can tell them in Vienna that there is no means of making him listen to reason."

So there, M. le Comte, is what happened at the two interviews which the Duke de Gramont mentions in his letter of the 8th January.

When I arrived in Vienna two days later I had the honour to give a verbal account of these interviews to our august Master and to M. le Comte de Beust, but as they were quite private and of no great importance it was not necessary to call upon me to make a written record of them..

* *Lord Lyons to Lord Granville*

12th July.

I have only time to report briefly what passed at an interview with the Duc de Gramont from which I have just

returned. The Duke said that the answer of the King of Prussia was neither courteous nor satisfactory. His Majesty disclaimed all connection with the offer of the Crown of Spain to the Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern and declined to advise the Prince to withdraw his acceptance. On the other hand, Prince Leopold's father had formally announced in the name of his son that the acceptance was withdrawn. In fact the Prince had sent a copy of the telegram which he had despatched to Marshal Prim, declaring that his son's candidature was at an end.

M. de Gramont said that this state of things was very embarrassing to the French Government. On the one hand, public opinion was so much excited in France that it was doubtful whether the Ministry would not be overthrown, if it went down to the Chamber to-morrow and announced that it regarded the affair as finished without having obtained some more complete satisfaction from Prussia. On the other hand, the renunciation of the Crown by Prince Leopold put an end to the original cause of dispute. The most satisfactory part of the affair was (M. de Gramont said) that Spain was at all events now quite clear of the dispute. The quarrel, if quarrel there was, was confined to France and Prussia.

I did not conceal from M. de Gramont my surprise and regret that the French Government should hesitate for a moment to accept the renunciation of the Prince as a settlement of the affair. I reminded him pointedly of the assurance which he had formally authorized me to give to Her Majesty's Government that if the Prince withdrew his candidature the affair would be at an end. I urged as strongly as I could all the reasons which would render a withdrawal, on his part, from this assurance painful and disquieting to Her Majesty's Government.

I pointed out, moreover, that the renunciation wholly changed the position of France. If war took place now, all Europe would say that it was the fault of France; that France rushed into it, without any substantial cause, merely for pride and resentment. One of the advantages of the former position of France was that the quarrel rested on a cause in which the feelings of Germany were very little concerned and German interests not at all. Now Prussia

might well expect to rally all Germany to resist an attack which could be attributed to no other motives than ill will and jealousy on the part of France and a passionate desire to humiliate her neighbour.

In fact, I said, France would have public opinion throughout the world against her, and her antagonist would have all the advantage of being manifestly forced into the war in self-defence to repel an attack. If there should at the first moment be some disappointment felt here in the Chamber and in the country, I could not but think that the Ministry would in a very short time stand better with both if it contented itself with the diplomatic triumph it had achieved, and abstained from plunging the country into war for which there was certainly no avowable motive.

After some discussion M. de Gramont said he was not far from agreeing with me ; but still he did not know how the Ministry could face the country.

Two months later the tragic war was over and the Emperor was a prisoner in Germany. At the end of the month he gives to one of his Ministers a picture of his feelings.

* *Napoleon III to the Marquis de la Valette*¹

Wilhelmshöhe, 30th September, 1870.

My dear Monsieur de la Valette,

I hear you wrote to me some time ago, and were surprised at receiving no answer ; assuredly, if your letter had reached me I should not have failed to express my gratitude for your remembrance, and my wish to keep in touch with you, since in every circumstance of my life you have proved yourself a true friend and a prudent counsellor. I shall say nothing of the recent pressure of events. You can guess the feelings which rend my heart. I emphasize this last word, for a heart is truly rent and torn when it is the prey of such conflicting impressions and emotions. Love for my country, hatred of those who govern it, abhorrence of the foreigner, a fervid longing for peace, contempt for fame, a yearning for my

¹ Reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

native soil, the desire for rest, and a passionate eagerness to renew the struggle, such are the preoccupations which distract my soul.

I hope that your whole family is with you, and your health good. In token of my sincere friendship,

NAPOLEON.

The following is an extract from Herr Mels Cohen, a Jewish journalist.

* *Wilhelmshöhe.*

"I am accused of having provoked this war principally for the sake of dynastic interests," said Napoleon III to Mels, "hardly anyone considers that, on the contrary, it would have been to my advantage for family reasons to see the throne of Spain occupied by the Prince of Hohenzollern, who is doubly related to me, as the great-grandson of Caroline Bonaparte and the grandson of Stéphanie Beauharnais. Or again, should I have fought against him for dynastic interests? His relationship with the King of Prussia is lost in obscurity; it is actually disputed; his relationship with me dates from yesterday. Add to this that his father, Prince Antoine, was one of the best friends of my youth—and years have not dimmed our memory of happier times—and you will realize that *I should be trampling on the interests of my house by opposing vigorously his acceptance of the Crown of Spain.*

"But most of my enemies," he continued, with a melancholy smile, "are only anxious to hurl at me neatly phrased insults. They know them to be false, but others, without either understanding them or thinking them over, repeat them. History will ignore these baseless accusations."

"But," I asked, "putting aside the dynastic question, would it be so grave a danger for France if a Hohenzollern reigned in Spain?"

"Yes," replied the Emperor, "for at the end of two or three years he would infallibly fall from the throne, and then Prussia would inevitably intervene in Spain. A Power of the importance of your new Germany neither can nor ought to allow a Prince, belonging officially to its royal house, to be hunted out of a country which has chosen or accepted him



Chiswick 29 April 1872

THE EMPEROR AT CAMDEN PLACE

From a signed photograph in the possession of Sir Victor Wellcome

as Sovereign. It is this consideration which has guided me in the affair of Prince Leopold. If a foreign prince had the least chance of being able to maintain himself in Spain, I should not have opposed his candidature, and I should merely have tried to counterbalance the German influence at Madrid. But the proud blood of Spain will accept no foreign masters, and the difficulties of the situation confronting Prince Leopold in a few years would induce Germany itself to assume the supreme power in order to support him.

"But then, sire, what about Prince Amedeo, who has just been elected?"

"He will not reign three years."

"And Italy?"

"Italy will not care, if he falls, for she has the excuse of her weakness, which neither Germany nor France can plead. A great nation like yours or mine cannot abandon its princes. That is why I have always energetically opposed the acceptance by one of my relations of the offer of any candidature whatsoever. And, believe me, such occasions have not been wanting."

"M. de Bismarck has the good fortune to be only a Minister," said Napoleon III to Mels. "Possessing the confidence of his Sovereign to a truly extraordinary degree, he is free to resign and has nothing to fear. If the war of 1870 had proved disastrous to Prussia, your Chancellor would now be hunting hares in Pomerania. Nothing worse would have happened to him. A responsibility covered by the King's majesty—a great diplomatic talent—a good fortune almost without parallel in history—with these, what hazard is too dangerous?"

The Emperor became thoughtful and paused a moment; then he resumed.

"This fourth of September, think then what a stroke of luck for M. de Bismarck! I repeat what I have already told you several times: could he have foreseen it? Most certainly he could not. I admit that I myself had never expected it. Could I imagine that this nation, formerly so chivalrous and generous, would take advantage of the moment of my misfortunes to avenge itself for imaginary injuries? No, it is

not the nation which has done this. It is not France who herself smoothed the difficulties which threatened to wreck the fortunes of M. de Bismarck ; it is certain men—but, my God ! what men !”

“ In the opinion of Your Majesty what would have been the issue of this disastrous war if the 4th of September had not changed the form of Government,” Mels asked.

“ Peace would have been signed within a month,” the Emperor answered. “ And if M. de Bismarck had been against it, the whole of Europe would have enforced it. On what terms ? No matter. At all events on better terms than those to which we had to submit later.

“ Then France would have recovered in ten, in twenty years, longer if necessary, but she would not have bled from the ghastly wounds which such a war inflicts.

“ But to return to M. de Bismarck, and to the good fortune which attends all his enterprises. Possibly his *genius* will reveal itself at his first reverse. Hitherto I have only seen exceptional circumstances which favoured a great *talent*. . . .

“ M. de Bismarck has worked wonders for Germany, but you must allow that fate has granted him assistance with which he could overcome all obstacles with comparative ease, the absolute confidence of the King, the series of victories, and lastly a nation which bends to his will like a reed before the wind.

“ And this war which has ended so gloriously will increase the nation’s subservience to him.”

The Emperor reflected a moment, then he said :—

“ Who knows if a few years hence, especially if this war is Prussia’s last, a certain spirit which I have formerly met in Germany does not awaken ? There are certain things, certain ideas, which are unconquerable . . . except by putting them into practice.”

“ I am afraid I do not quite understand Your Majesty,” Mels answered.

“ This war, like indeed all modern wars, will advance by ten years a question which, sooner or later, cannot fail to assume an extreme importance in our old and thickly

populated continent. I mean the social question. So far as I can see, M. de Bismarck has never troubled himself about it. He will be forced to do so. But who, either on the throne or in the council chamber has interested himself in the working-man? Myself alone! And if I return to power this will be the question which interests me most, for the future depends on it. The Chancellor, you will see, will realize this too late, and only then M. de Bismarck will show whether he is a man of genius, or a cunning diplomat favoured by fortune.

"Believe me and note my words," said the Emperor to the journalist, "publish them to-morrow if you like, to remember when they were spoken. Not a year, not six months will pass after the inevitable *dénouement* of the war with Germany, before millions of Frenchmen will look round despairingly towards all points of the compass in search of a new *coup d'état* which shall restore to the country quiet, peace, and order! Very few years will pass before the whole of Europe will cry out for this saviour whom France will seek in a few months. And woe to the world if it fails to find him!"

He stared in front of him for a few moments, and whilst, with my heart too full to find expression, I listened with an almost religious attention, he said:—

"Horrible things will happen in France after the peace. They will be checked—they will be punished—but they will not be uprooted, and the horror will return. The hydra heads of the monster will reappear incessantly—revolution, in spite of the appearance of a deceptive calm, will be continuous, and will linger on indefinitely. Suppressed in one place it will break out in another, like a cancer which slowly absorbs the richness from blood. Finally, wearying for a moment, it will stop, and the ignorant and foolish, who guide the State, will believe that they have conquered by moderation and by what they call legality. The fools! And then the awakening! What before would have seemed the "Terror" will be mere child's play! . . . And then, though it will be too late, they will demand a *coup d'état*."

* *Napoleon III to Lord Cowley*¹

Wilhelmshöhe, 24th January, 1871.

My dear Lord Cowley,

It is kind of you to think of me and to send me your news. Your letter gave me great pleasure; I feel that I retain your friendship which I value highly. Like myself you must deplore the blood which flows uselessly in France and the ruins which are piling one upon the other. One can only hope that the war will end quickly. Give my kindest regards to Lady Cowley. I shall never forget that she was the first person to visit me in my captivity. Accept, dear Lord Cowley, this token of my sincere friendship.

NAPOLEON.

On a foggy morning in the December of 1872, the Jewish journalist from Cassel came back to Chislehurst to see the Emperor once more. As he approached the gates of Camden House, an old Scotch woman who was no longer sane was waiting at the gates with a bunch of broom, calling down on the Emperor's head the blessings of prosperity and power.

When the Emperor had received Mels with his accustomed graciousness, he said, "These fogs are the cause of all my discomfort, they stifle me. A fortnight of brilliant sunshine such as we enjoyed at Wilhelmshöhe, and I should be cured."

Then, as usual, they discussed French affairs, and when Mels said that the hope of an Imperial restoration had enormously increased of late, the Emperor replied :—

"Neither more nor less! It follows a path traced by the inexorable hand of Providence. It is a progressive march which nothing can stop, for the re-establishment of the Empire is an historical necessity."

"But, Sire, is it impossible to hasten the pace?"

"It would be wrong," Napoleon replied. "The rivers which flow most slowly are the most beneficent. The

¹ Reprinted from *The Paris Embassy*.

Republic is a disease for France : twice already the doctors have let it gain a foothold ; this time, it seems, it must be eradicated. Only then can I or my son cure her effectually. And besides how is France to be delivered from these charlatans, who would rather tear her in pieces than expose their quackeries. I know there is a general opinion that force must be opposed with force, that no consideration is due to men who place themselves in that position without having the courage to submit their actions to the national vote. But do they imagine that the age of manifestos will then begin ? Have they reflected that if to-day I give to a general the right to restore me to the throne, in six months' time I cannot deny him the right to depose me. M. Thiers knows well that at a single word from me the flag of the Empire would be raised in fifty places at once from one end of France to the other, and the Army would recall as if by magic its ancient battle-cry of Malakoff and Solferino. But M. Thiers knows also that I will never speak that word ! For I am still the Emperor of the French and my first duty is still to consider the interests of France.”

He paused for a moment, then he said :—

“ It is my pride and consolation that I can claim that in all my actions and in all my thoughts, I have had one motive only, the happiness and greatness of France. I may sometimes have been mistaken in my choice of means and men, but the future Macaulay of my reign will have no difficulty in recognizing that that has been the goal of all my actions ! . . . And as the democratic form of Empire alone is capable of recognizing it, the Empire will be re-established—that is certain. It is as certain as that this January fog will be followed by clear and brilliant sunshine.

“ He was silent,” Mels continues. “ I observed that it tired him too much to talk and, without letting him notice my impression, and to save him the trouble of answering me, I recalled to him one by one Wilhelmshöhe and all those who had had the honour to be associated with him in his captivity. He listened to me with a kindly smile and with rapt attention. Now and then he interrupted me to ask for news of someone whom I had almost forgotten. When at last with a full heart

and biting my lips till they bled to conceal my emotion, I took leave of the Emperor, he raised himself painfully from his armchair and said :—

“ Come and see me often here—or perhaps in France—some day. And remember that you gave me your word at Wilhelmshöhe not to forget me if fortune should smile again upon the Napoleons.”

Then he took my hand. “ Adieu,” he said, “ may you be happy, very happy ! ”

“ *Au revoir*,” I answered smiling, “ *au revoir*, Sire.”

“ *Au revoir*,” he replied slowly, in a voice so low that it showed that life was weary in him, and drawing to a close.

I left Camden House. . . . I cannot express how utterly sad I felt. Baron Corvisart went with me as far as the iron gates. All at once, overcome by a sudden anxiety, I seized his hand.

“ Doctor,” I cried, “ tell me the truth for heaven’s sake, how is the Emperor ? ”

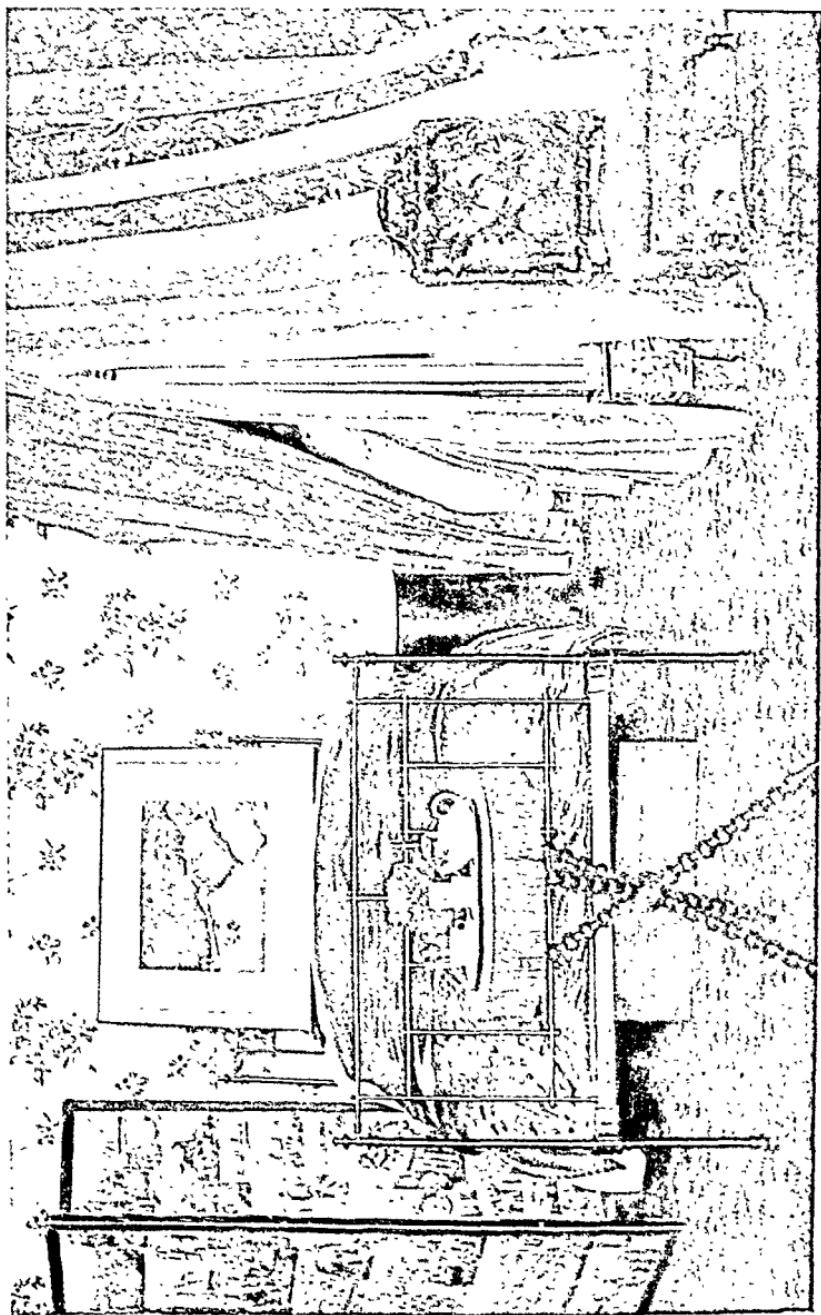
“ You have seen him,” he answered in a strained voice : then he left me abruptly.

* * * * *

“ I felt,” concludes Mels, “ that my heart was broken and stopped in the middle of the heath ; I could go no further. My eyes were full of tears, and hardly knowing what I did, I clasped my hands ; but before a word came to my lips to raise my soul towards God, the cracked and drawling voice of the mad old woman from Scotland broke in upon my thought :—

“ *May the heaven grant . . . his most wonderful gifts . . . to Your Powerful Majesty . . . my gracious Lord !*

“ And the poor woman raised to the skies her bunch of yellow broom. I felt they were everlastings.”



THE BED IN WHICH THE EMPEROR DIED IN HIS ROOM AT CAMDEN PLACE

From a photograph in the possession of Sir Victor Wellesley.

APPENDIX

Lord Augustus Loftus to Lord John Russell

Vienna, 19th April, 1860.

My Lord,

I have been confidentially informed by one of my colleagues of an interesting and important conversation which he had lately held with the French Ambassador at this Court.

In referring to the policy of the Emperor Napoleon, the Marquis de Moustier stated that previous to leaving Paris he had had a long conversation with His Majesty on which the following is the substance.

The Emperor Napoleon had observed that when residing in England he had been struck by the enormous commercial wealth and industry of Great Britain which were the foundations of her power and prosperity, and that he had often asked himself how it was that France with equal elements for commercial greatness still remained far behind England in commercial wealth and activity. His Majesty had at last come to the conclusion that the advantage enjoyed by Great Britain were entirely to be attributed to her insular position and to the fact that nature had given her a frontier which did not require, as in France, the maintenance of an enormous military power to protect it. The military service in France, independently of the heavy cost to the nation, absorbed annually a very large portion of the male population which could be lucratively devoted to reproductive labour. It was therefore necessary in His Majesty's opinion to rectify the frontiers of France in such a manner as to render her secure from attack and thus enable her to diminish her army and her military expense.

On the south-western frontier, His Majesty observed, France was fully protected by the natural frontier of the Pyrenees. She had now on her south-eastern frontier acquired the Alps as necessary for her safety. The neutrality of Switzerland assured her a safe frontier on the eastern side, and the neutrality of Belgium provided for her security on the

Benedetti, 58, 247, 304-5, 308-311
 Benningsen, M. de, 336
 Bernard, 136
 Bernstorff, Count, 225
 Bessarabia, 97, 263
 Beust, M. de, 333
 Bigelow, Mr. 316
 Bismarck, Count, 207, 219, 222, 225, 232, 236, 241, 247, 249, 252, 256, 272, 300, 303, 305, 342, 361
 Black Sea: 52, 59; neutrality of, 75, 97, 100; neutrality of British ships in, 118
 Blanc, Louis, 117
 Bloomfield, Lord, 302-5
 Bohemia, 285
 Bologna, 143, 165, 189
 Bomarsand, 65
 Bonaparte, Jerome (King of Westphalia), 31, 35, 41
 Bosnia, 193, 262
 Bourguenay, 94, 97
 Bruat, 84
 Buchanan, 181
 Bucharest, 67
 Bulgaria, 97
 Bulwer, Sir H., 120
 Buol-Schauenstein, Count, 111
 Burgoyne, Sir John, 53

C

Cambridge, Duke of, 54, 71, 73, 97, 157
 Canada, 231
 Canrobert, 69, 83
 Carbonari, 179
 Carlist War, 15, 16, 181
 Carrara, 143
 Castellane, General de, 37
 Castiglione, Countess, 109, 114

Cavalry, 68
 Cavour, 101, 109, 111, 123, 125, 142, 157-8, 161-2, 165, 179, 184
 Chantilly, 225
 Chargarnier, General, 32
 Chartres, Duc de, 150
 Chimay, Prince de, 156
 China, 136, 172
 Christian, Princess, 312
 Cialdini, General, 292
 Clarendon, Lord: 108, 119, 120, 272, 320, 352; letters from Lord Cowley, 47-134, 231-284
 Clothilde, Princess, 147, 157-8
 Cobden, Richard, 23, 183
 Codrington, Sir L., 108
 Colonies, French, 153, 230
 Coloredo, Count, 111
 Compèigne, 43, 44, 101, 114, 130, 131, 174, 230-2
 Congress: proposed, to revise treaties of 1815, 207, 321; questions for solution, 260, 270; Austria's objections to, 274-8; Paris, 1856, 22, 104, 108, 142-5, 199
 Conneau, Dr., 147
 Constantine, Grand Duke, 221, 228
 Constantinople, 54, 56
 Contades, Marquise de, 44
 Council of War, 102
 Couza, Prince, 192
 Cowley, Henry Wellesley, First Earl: British Ambassador in Paris, 14; confidant of the Emperor, 26, 120; Queen Victoria's esteem for, 27; friendship for Napoleon III, 28, 181; criticism of Napoleon III, 128, 163-4,

203, 232; distrust of Napoleon III, 181; memorandum on French policy, 200-5; views on "theological friendship", 300; foresight in regard to Prussia, 303; letter from Napoleon III, 374

Cowley, Countess, 90-1; 374
Crimean War: causes of, 57; diversities of administration, 96; futility of, 108; Napoleon's desiderata, 94; Napoleon's motives, 138; Napoleon's strategy, 107; shipping and food supplies, 71; transport of troops, 79, 89

Cromer, Lord, 17

Cronstadt, 60, 100

Cuba, 124

D

Dalmatia, 192
Danilo, Prince, 185
Danube, 97, 121, 139, 185
Danubian Principality, 174
Denmark, war with Prussia, 207, 226, 228
D'Israeli, Benjamin, 185-6
Diplomacy, 14, 15, 21
Drouyn de Lhuys: 46, 57, 223, 230, 244, 305; resignation, 82; Franco-British policy, 103; differences with Napoleon III, 307-8

E

Earle, Mr., 186
Egypt, 174
Elbe, Duchies of the, 234, 241

Eugénie, Empress of the French: 26, 60, 90, 113, 119, 120, 131-2, 158, 165, 167, 181, 209, 230, 233; letter to Lord Cowley *re* Bernard, 136; interest in politics, 212-14, 240, 248, 255, 312, 338; advice to Metternich in 1866, 271, 283; Spain and the Congress, 272; distress about the Emperor's decline, 301; proposed visit to Rome, 317-320; Franco-Prussian War, 326

Eupatoria, 81, 96, 108

Europe, map of, 94, 95, 182, 195

F

Fane, Mr. Julian, 319, 320
Favre, Jules, 196, 206, 243
Ferdinand, King of Naples, 144
Ferdinand, King of Portugal, 212
Ferguson, Dr., 194-5
Finance, France, 131, 150
Finland, 59
Flahault, 211
Fleury, 79, 288
Florence, 145, 174, 243, 245
Fontainebleau, 43, 114, 133, 183, 217, 233
Fould, 56, 211-12, 237, 258
France: Foreign relations, 119, 121, 153, 154, 302; frontiers, 119, 175, 178, 182, 304, 377-8; Franco-British friendship, 122; relations with Germany, 156, 185, 243, 292, 304-5, 323; relations with Poland, 220; internal affairs,

131, 194, 196, 198, 206, 237,
303-4, 314, 318-19.
Francis Joseph, Emperor of
Austria: 55, 109, 169, 228,
236; letters from Louis
Napoleon, 56, 344, 353
Frankfort, 296, 299
Free Trade, 153
Frossard, General, 294

G

Gablenz, General, 286-7
Gaeta, 188, 193
Galicians, subjects of Austria,
141
Galliena, 157
Gallipoli, proposed landing at,
55
Garibaldi, Giuseppe, 186, 187,
205, 280, 282
Garter, Order of, for Louis
Napoleon, 62
Genoa: 165, Duchess of, 147
Germany: Foreign relations:
Austria, 250; France, 156,
191, 323; supremacy of
Prussia, 218, 249; unity of,
298, 311, 315, 323
Gladstone, W. E., 180
Goltz, Count von der: 233, 241,
247, 249, 256, 259, 273, 303-5,
322; advocates Alliance with
France, 311

Gorce, Pierre de la, 207
Gortschakoff, 105, 128, 183, 342
Graham, Sir James, 63
Gramont, Duc de, 278, 337-8,
356, 358-361
Granville, Lord: Ambassador
in Paris, 16; Ambassador in
St. Petersburg, 122
Greece: 228; Queen of, 128;
throne of, 212

H

Hamilton, Duchess of, 41
Hammond, 196
Hango, 68
Hare and Hounds at Compègne,
130
Hatzfeldt, Count, 38
Heidelberg, 184
Henry, Prince of the Nether-
lands, 212
Herzegovina, 193, 262
Hesse, Electorate, 95
Hidalgo, 212
Hohenzollern: Prince Charles
of, 300, 359; Prince Leopold
of, 356, 358-9, 361-5, 368.
Holland: King of, 310, 323,
327-8, 330; Sophie, Queen
of, 128, 138, 209
Howden, Lord, 149
Hübner, Baron: 24, 25, 30,
159, 160, 162, 189; apprecia-
tion of Louis Napoleon, 31-5;
letters to Prince Schwartz-
berg, 36, 110-11; letters to
Count Buol, 40, 51, 118-19,
121, 123, 125, 134, 135, 138,
141, 155, 161
Hungary, 191-2, 195, 347-9
Hudson, Sir James, 186

I

"Independence Belge," 91
India, 132
Isabel, Queen of Spain, 120, 188
Italy: 109-206; unity of, 112,
161, 193, 228; independence
of, 135; proposals for parti-
tion and Confederation, 144-
6; *casus belli* with Austria,
143, 150; intervention by
France, 161-3, 168; central,

170, 175; Federation of Italian States, 116, 183; proposal for Russian mediation, 176

J

Jusserand, M., French Ambassador in Washington, 15

K

Kamiesch, 98

Kent, Duchess of, 73

Kertch, 83, 98

Kissileff, Russian Ambassador in Paris, 39, 129, 176

Klapka, 169

Koniggratz, 291

Kossuth, 169, 192

L

La Guérronnière, 189

Landau, 244

Lansdowne, Lord, 97

La Valette, Marquis de, 258, 313, 369

Le Boeuf, General, 294

Ledru-Rollin, 123

Legion of Honour, 216

Le Hou, Madame, 113

Leopold, King of the Belgians, 49, 156, 233, 331

Leopold, Crown Prince of Belgium, 47

Lesseps, M. de, 230

Leuchtenberg, Duc de, 313

Lieven, Madame de, 70, 76

Loftus, Lord Augustus, 182, 377

Lombardy, liberation of, 109–110, 157, 161, 164–6

Louis Philippe: 17; policy of, 119, 220; coincidence with Napoleon III, 240

Luxemburg: 175, 208, 243, 307–9, 322–355; Lord Stanley's views, 339

Lyons, Lord: 17, 84; letters to Lord Granville, 356–369

M

Macmahon, General, 230

Madagascar, 214

Madrid, 172

Magne, Minister of Finance, 70

Malmesbury, Lord, 28, 35, 156–7, 161

Mannheim, 119

Marches, the, 189

Maria, Archduchess of Austria, 47

Marie Louise of Austria, 158, 284

Marx, Carl, 14

Massa, 143

Massimo d'Azeglio, 165

Mathilde, Princess, 155, 162

Maximilian: Archduke of Austria, 210; Emperor of Mexico, 229, 230, 232, 239, 316, 344

Mazzini, 123, 132, 151, 198, 214, 229

Medal, Crimean War, 70, 94

Melzi, Duke de, 141

Mentschikoff, Prince, 50

Mercier, 209

Metternich: Prince Richard, 25, 167, 182, 188, 230, 270, 297; belief in Louis

Napoleon, 249; letters to Count Rechberg-Rothenlowen, 167–222; letters to

Count Mensdorff, 247–281; letters to Baron Beust, 235–8, 344, 363; Princess Richard,

25, 177

Metz, 119
 Mexico, 207-212, 214-15, 223,
 229, 230-2, 239, 316
 Milan, 174
 Modena, 143, 151, 173, 174
 Moldavia, 52, 97, 121
 Monetary questions, 132
 Moniteur, 38, 54, 131, 133, 135,
 155, 301
 Montalembert, 198
 Montenegro, 139, 200
 Montijo, Doña Eugénia de
 Guzman de, 40, 42, 44
 Morny, Duc de: 39, 46, 50-1,
 56, 70, 118, 122, 132, 206,
 226; accused of disloyalty,
 56, 105
 Morocco, 172
 Moustier, Marquis de, 182, 323,
 320, 336-7, 339, 377
 Murat, 91, 115-16, 130, 145

N

Napier, Admiral Sir Charles, 63
 Naples, 115, 130, 145, 188-9,
 280
 Napoleon Bonaparte I, 134, 284
 Napoleon Jerome, Prince: 31,
 97, 148, 155, 161, 167, 192,
 195, 247, 282, 284, 348, 353;
 marriage, 147-8, 153, 157-8;
 mission to Russia, 152-3,
 161; mission to Florence, 294
 Napoleon III: assassination,
 fears of, 123; Prince
 President, 31; *Coup d'État*,
 34; Empire elective, not
 legitimate, 36; title, 17, 34,
 36; presentation of cre-
 dentials to, 39; marriage,
 40, 45-6; letters to Lord
 Cowley, 63, 68, 70, 82-3,
 94, 104, 106-7, 122, 180,

192, 374; relations with
 England, 93, 132, 180, 189,
 192, 204, 213; Garter for,
 62; visit to Windsor, 79,
 80; proposal to visit the
 Crimea, 72-5, 79, 80-1, 88;
 health, 113-14, 128, 130, 205,
 298, 301, 305-6, 312-14, 352;
 accused of treachery, 168-9;
 betrays Austria to Prussia,
 256, 302-3; New Year cele-
 brations with Metternich,
 177; general mistrust of,
 268-282; relations with
 D'Israeli, 185; embarrass-
 ments in Italy, 188, 191, 197,
 289; plausibility, 188;
 opportunist, 189, 203, 300;
 proposals for Parliamentary
 Government, 190; relations
 with French Clergy, 192, 317;
 revolutionary leanings, 191;
 national prestige, 205; over-
 tures to Austria, 223; Con-
 gress, proposals for, 224-5;
 friendly to Prussia, 236;
 financial reforms, 237; letter
 to King William I, 246;
 neutrality in Austro-Prussian
 War, 280-4, 294; policy of
 a coalition of Powers, 299;
 failure of his plans, 313;
 interview with Bismarck, 343;
 distrust of Bismarck's policy,
 346

Narvaez, 120
 Navy, French, 149
 Neufchatel, 119, 233
 Newcastle, Duke of, 61, 62
 Nicholas, Emperor of Russia,
 104, 138, 129
 Nice, county of, 145, 175, 180,
 228

Niel, Marshal, 83, 86-7
 Nigra, Signor, 150, 191, 246,
 258
 Normanby, Lord, 27, 30

O

Odessa, 60, 65
 O'Donnell, 120
 Olga, Princess, 128
 Ollivier, Emile, 206, 356, 357
 Olozaga, 188, 361
 Omar Pasha, 60, 62, 85
 Orleans, Duchesse de, 34
 Orsini, 132, 134-7
 Osborne, 126

P

Palmerston, Lord: 17, 30, 70,
 102, 147, 158, 176, 188, 223;
 friction with Napoleon III,
 126; friction with Russia,
 119; Persigny's admiration
 for, 134; policy in regard to
 France, 30, 185-7
 Paris, Congress of (1856), 22
 Parma, 173-4
 Parma, Duchess of, 145
 Peace, basis for, 97-9.
 Peking, 136
 Pélissier, 86-8, 96, 108
 Persigny, 56, 84, 119, 126, 134,
 187
 Pfoldten, M. de, 235
 Piacenza, 143
 Piedmont, 109, 135, 155, 161,
 170, 173, 176, 184, 188-9
 Pietre, 135
 Pitti Palace, 145
 Plombières, 109, 113, 115, 121,
 146
 Po, 292
 Poland, 64, 78, 92, 95, 109,

192, 195-6, 207, 214, 216,
 218-220, 225, 228, 262
 Polish flag, 141

Pope: 46, 109, 113, 140, 143,
 158, 186, 188, 192, 195, 206,
 229, 316-17; temporal
 authority of, 116, 156, 174,
 189, 320-4; journey to
 Bologna, 126; place in Italian
 Confederation, 145, 166

Portugal: 188, 239; King of,
 239

Prague, siege of, 285

Press: British, 117, 133;
 Belgian, 332; French, 135,
 248, 323; Foreign, 135

Prim, General, 209, 211, 362-3

Prince Imperial: birth, 108;
 threat to kidnap, 134

Principalities: 52, 57, 60, 97,
 171, 183, 192, 262, 280-1;
 union of, 128, 130, 138-9, 300

Prussia: Internal affairs, 218;
 attitude to Crimean War, 56;
 growth of, 182, 234, 248;
 King William I of, 222, 228,
 233, 246, 288, 291; Prince of,
 nervous of Franco-Russian
 intrigues, 127; Prince of,
 attitude to Austro-Italian War,
 146, 183; frontiers, 244, 279;
 French public feeling against,
 306; preponderant influence
 in Northern Germany, 249,
 290

R

Rachel, 148
 Raglan, Lord, 59, 77, 79, 83-8
 Railways, Spain, 149
 Rambouillet, 178
 Regency, Council of, 353

Religion, disputes in the East, 59, 97
 Reuss, Prince, 26, 217, 288
 Reval, 68
 Rhine, 178, 182-4, 200-3, 226, 256, 261, 303
 Riza, 87
 Robinson, 183
 Romagna, 143, 176, 189
 Romanovsky, 212
 Rome: 113, 192, 206; French garrison, 144, 158, 160, 161, 174, 176, 187, 196, 211-12, 229, 274
 Ros, Major-General, 88
 Rouher, 70, 225, 348
 Roumania, 121, 171, 359
 Roumanians in Austria, 141
 Russell, Lord John: Earl, letters to, 40-6, 165-194, 206, 209-230; Mr. Odo, letters to, 213, 274
 Russia: Napoleon's proposal for attack in the North, 100; Emperor Alexander desires peace, 103; Entente with France, 109, 121, 155; complications with France, 118, 122, 220; state of, 149; policy in regard to Turkey 183

S

Sadowa, 208
 Saint Jean d'Acre, 59
 St. Arnaud, 59, 61
 Salzburg, 236
 Sardinia, Island of, 194
 Satory, 32
 Savigny, 104
 Savoy, 109, 145, 157, 175-9, 180-2, 192
 Saxe-Coburg, Duke of, 89, 93, 131, 156
 Schleswig-Holstein, 262
 Schmerling, 221
 Schwartzenberg, 34
 Schwalbach, 228
 Sebastopol, 54-5, 60, 62, 65, 70, 77, 84-6
 Serbia, 263
 Serrano: Spanish Ambassador, 117; Regent, 360
 Siegmaringen, Hereditary Prince of, 252
 Silesia, 262, 266, 270
 Silver, scarcity of, 132
 Simpheropol, 81
 Sinope, 75
 Solferino, 167, 315
 Solms, M. de, 363
 Sophie, Archduchess, 169
 Spain, Crown of, 362-5, 368
 Stanley, Lord, letters from Lord Cowley, 292-344
 Stephanie, Duchess of Baden, 138
 Stolzenfels, 228
 Stockmar, Baron, 27
 Stratford de Redcliffe, Lord; 28, 50, 57, 87; letters from Lord Cowley, 41, 53, 56, 59; letters to Lord Cowley, 56
 Stuart, Lord Dudley (death), 67
 Stuttgart, meeting of Czar and Napoleon III, 127, 129, 197, 220
 Suez Canal, 229
 Sultan of Turkey, 214
 Sutherland, Duchess of, 89
 Sveaborg, 63, 68
 Sweden, 59, 70
 Swiss, in Rome, 111
 Switzerland, 243
 Syria, 195

T

Tariffs, 183
 Telegraph, 15
 Thiers: 13, 264; conflict with Napoleon III, 30, 34, 257; quoted by Napoleon III, 122, 243

Tour d'Auvergne, Prince de la, 339, 352.
 Thouvenel, 87, 179, 180, 186, 190, 206, 211, 213

Times, The 40, 133

Treaties of 1815, 95, 114, 119, 153, 154, 175, 203, 208, 257

Treaty: Commercial, France with England, 109, 179, 185; commercial, Austria and Sardinia, 143; Convention de Gastein, 233; of London, 254; of Paris, 154, 263; of Prague, 243; Swedish, 92; Tripartite Agreement, 352; Tripartite, guarantee for Ottoman Dominions, 97; Vienna, 78; Zürich, 200; Italian Convention, 228

Tunis, 227

Turin, 158, 186, 206

Turkey: Defence of the Sultan, 54, 101, 171; moribund, 105, 108, 129, 138, 153; Austrian attitude *re*, 139, 193; Lord Palmerston's views on, 149; Napoleon's antipathy to, 213; justice to, from Great Powers, 281

Tuscany: 173, 176; Grand Duke of, 169, 280

Tyrol, 152

U

Umbria, 189

United States of America: 204,

207, 231; annexation of Mexico, 124; relations with France, 316

V

Vaillant Marshal, 59, 87-9, 92, 106, 244

Venetia, 170, 172-3, 176, 186, 192-3, 197, 200, 237, 258, 262, 275, 297

Vera Cruz, 210

Victoria, Princess Royal, 90

Victoria, Queen: 216, 258, 278; letters to Lady Cowley, 90-1; attitude to Louis Napoleon, 57, 186; invitation to Louis Napoleon, 62, 77; sympathy for French losses, 88; visit to Paris, 89, 90

Victor Emmanuel: King of Sardinia, 95, 99, 101, 109-111, 142, 157, 161, 165, 173, 195, 234, 282, 351; letter from Cavour, 142

Villafranca, Pact of, 165, 169, 174, 234

Villeneuve, l'Étang, 351

Vimercati, 351

Vitzthum, Baron, letter to Baron Beust, 345, 351

Vosges, 146

W

Wales, Albert Edward, Prince of, 216

Walewsky, Count: French Ambassador in London, 54, 79, 91; appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, 82, 84, 104-130, 155, 161, 172, 181, 190; pro-Russian, 120-1; Italian affairs, 123, 162; decline in favour, 133, 148

Walewsky, Countess, 133, 148, 190

War, Franco-Prussian: inevitable, 327; Bismarck's duplicity, 327, 329, 342; mutual ill-feeling, 331; mediation by M. de Beust, 333; mediation by H.M. Government, 341

Wellington, Duchess of, 89

Wendland, Herr, 244

Werther, Baron de, 353

"Wilhelmshöhe," 370-6

William I (see also Prussia): letter from Louis Napoleon, 326; visit to Paris, 342

Wurtemburg, Prince Royal of, 138, 223

Y

Yacoub Pasha, Governor of Jerusalem, 59

Z

Zürich, 167-9

